

ABSTRACT

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

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THE EFFECT OF PARENTAL SUPPORT AND SELECTED VARIABLES ON THE
EFFECTIVENESS OF A CREDIT RECOVERY PROGRAM AS IT RELATES
TO SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF GRADUATION CREDITS

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The recent interest in graduation rates (a phrase sometimes used interchangeably and incorrectly with attainment rates and completion rates) began with the Commission on the Future of Higher Education, also known as the Spellings Commissions, which called for “dramatic” changes in higher education to address the “persistent gap between the college attendance and graduation rates of low-income Americans and their more affluent peers” (Cook & Hartle, 2011, p. 1). As educators, we should strive to make sure that the students we serve receive a quality education, one that will prepare them to be college or career ready. In recent years, the national graduation rate does not ensure that educators are preparing their students for life after high school.

This study analyzed the findings from a specific credit recovery and how, when implemented with a strong parental involvement, a credit recovery can have a positive impact on the graduation rate. From the administering of a student survey and parent interview/questionnaire, it was determined that parental involvement and student motivation have the greatest impact on student achievement for students who participate in credit recovery. When students have consistent access to Georgia Virtual School, then their motivation is the strongest.

The findings in this study imply that parental support impacts the academic success of students. If parents said they were informed about the credit recovery procedures, this implies that there is a high level of communication between the school and home. Educational leaders should focus on areas or predictors within the family, society, or individual circumstances of the child, as well as in the academic surroundings and materials in order to meet the diverse needs of the students.

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TO SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF GRADUATION CREDITS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

When students enter high school their freshman year, the level of success that they experience is critical to their future. Dropping out, also known as school failure, is a serious problem throughout the country (Swanson, 2004). Beyond the lack of academic skill attainment, dropping out is a concern because it is associated with various negative outcomes for youth (e.g., increased delinquency/criminality, unemployment, etc.) (Robins & Ratcliff, 1980). Districts are faced with certain challenges, daily, that affect whether or not students graduate with their cohort. These challenges include language differences and socioeconomic disadvantages. Nationally, one in five children comes from a household headed by an immigrant and nearly one-fifth of American children live in poverty (Olson, 2000). Five out of every 100 young adults enrolled in high school in October 1999 left school before October 2000 without successfully completing a high school program (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2001). It is the goal of the educational system, to work through these challenges and get each student to graduate.

Impact of Dropping Out

When students make the decision to drop out of school, it can be based on a series of events; there is no single event on which to place the blame. A negative school experience influenced many students to leave before they received a diploma and was

caused by one or multiple factors (Harvard, n.d.). Challenging transitions to high school, not having the mastery of basic skills, and limited engagement in the classroom all affect graduation rates. The report, *Don't Call Them Dropouts: Understanding the Experiences of Young People Who Leave High School Before Graduation* (America's Promise Alliance, 2014), contains a trove of interesting data points about students who left school:

- Individuals who said they had a teacher who cared about them were 45% less likely to leave school.
- Participating in after school activities, and thus having the support of youth development workers, was related to a 67% lower likelihood of leaving school.
- Young people affected by homelessness were 87% more likely to leave school than those with a more stable place to live (Amos, 2014).

According to the report, *The Economic Benefits of Reducing the Dropout Rate Among Students of Color in the Nation's Forty-Five Largest Metropolitan Areas*, students of color made up a sizable portion of the estimated 600,000 students who dropped out from the Class of 2008 in the nations forty-five largest metropolitan areas (Amos, 2010). Of these students, approximately 113,600 were African American, 200,000 were Latino, 30,800 were Asian American, and 3,750 were American Indian (Amos, 2010). The likely contributions that the 300,000 "new graduates" would add to the nation's economy are:

- Increased earnings of \$2.3 billion in an average year;

- Increased home sales of an additional \$5.9 billion in mortgage capacity over what they would spend without a diploma;
- An additional 17,450 jobs from the increased spending in their local areas;
- An increase in the gross regional product by as much as \$3.1 billion;
- An additional \$1.6 billion spent and an additional \$636.6 million invested each year;
- An additional \$158.6 million spent on vehicle purchases; and
- Increased tax revenues of \$249.7 million (Amos, 2010).

The status dropout rate represents the percentage of 16 through 24 year-olds who are not enrolled in school and have not earned a high school credential (either a diploma or an equivalency credential such as a general educational development (GED) certificate (NCES, 2015). Based on data from the Current Population Survey, the status dropout rate decreased from 12% in 1990 to 7% in 2013, with most of the decline occurring after 2000 (when it was 11%) (NCES, 2015) (see Figure 1).

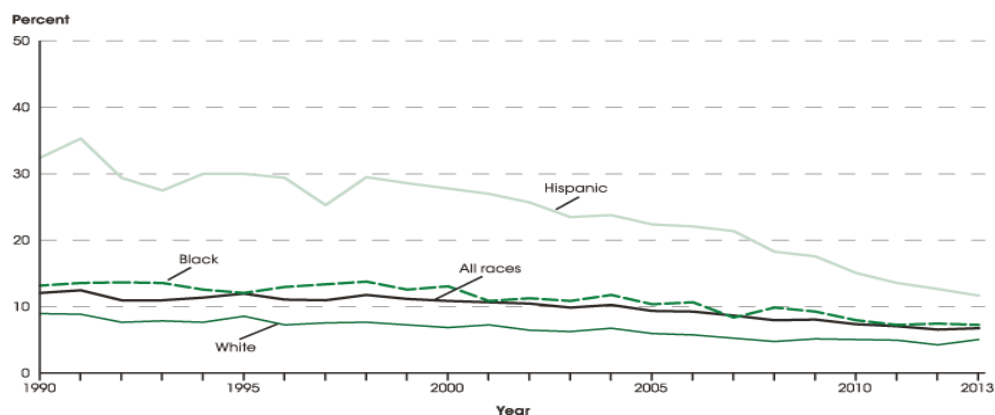


Figure 1. Status dropout rates of 16 through 24 year-olds by race/ethnicity: 1990 through 2013.

The dropout rate was lower for whites than for blacks during 1990-2013. During this period, the rate for whites declined from 9% to 5%; the rate for blacks declined from 13% to 7%; and the rate for Hispanics declined from 32% to 12% in 2013 (NCES, 2015).

Monrad (2007) reported that in the United States almost one-third of all “public high school students fail to graduate from high school” (p. 11). Everyone is impacted by high school dropouts with enormous economic and social cost (Education at a glance, 2006). “Dropouts create the nation’s and communities problems because of the lack of productive workers and accelerated cost associated with health care, incarceration, and other social service’s needs” (Bridgeland, Dilulio, & Morison, 2006, p. 2). Barack Obama, in his first major address on American education after assuming the presidency, pleaded with American youth that “Dropping out of high school is no longer an option. It’s not just quitting on yourself, it’s quitting on your country; and this country needs and values talents of every American” (Obama, 2009, para. 1).

The report, *Ending the silent epidemic: A Blueprint to Address America’s High School Dropout Crisis* (The Silent Epidemic, 2006) sponsored by several organizations including the Gates Foundation and National Governors’ Association, describes the challenges that face U.S. schools—and society as a whole—because of students becoming disengaged and dropping out of school:

- Every 29 seconds another student gives up on school, resulting in more than one million American high school students who drop out every year;

- Nearly one-third of all public high school students—and nearly one-half of all African Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans—fail to graduate from public high school with their class;
- Dropouts are more likely than high school graduates to be unemployed, in poor health, living in poverty, on public assistance, or single parents with children who drop out of high school;
- Dropouts are more than twice as likely as high school graduates to slip into poverty in a single year and three times more likely than college graduates to be unemployed;
- Dropouts are more than eight times as likely to be in jail or prison as high school graduates; and
- Dropouts are four times less likely to volunteer than college graduates, twice less likely to vote or participate in community projects, and represent only 3% of actively engaged citizens in the U.S. today.

Throughout the United States, it can be speculated that minimum wage is associated with uneducated people. However, this portrait that is being painted displays an inaccurate relationship between education and employment throughout America. In 2012, 87% of high school graduates were wage workers, and 72% of those worked at or below minimum wage (U. S. Department of Labor, 2012). To earn more than minimum wage, to maintain employment, and to provide for quality of life expectations, students must fulfill the requirements of earning a high school diploma as a measure of completing their education and demonstrating to future employers that they have what it

takes to succeed in life and become productive, contributing members of society (Scott, 2014). This assumption provides education at large with the moral authority to offer students who fail courses the opportunity ability for various attempts at achieving credit.

There was a strong association between grade retention and dropping out of school. As a remediation strategy, retention does not appear to improve school performance (Roderick, 1995). The stigma of failure and its effects far outweighed the benefits, and only increased the likelihood of the student dropping out of school (NCES, 1995a). The National Educational Longitudinal Survey of 1988 found that one-fifth of eighth graders had repeated at least one grade, with the proportion climbing to one out of three eighth graders from low-income families (NCES, 1995b). Nearly 450,000 students qualify for grade level retention each year (Warren & Saliba, 2012). This is concerning, as research has shown that students are 50% more likely to drop out of school after their first retention and 90% more likely to drop out after their second-grade level retention (Roderick, 1994). A study by American College Testing [ACT] (2008) reported that failing students in middle grades exhibited a deficit in two key indicators, academic discipline, and orderly conduct.

The mission of the American Diploma Project (ADP), a coalition of states that derived from the Education Summit, identified college and workplace skills, and incorporated those skills into standards, assessments, and high school graduation requirements (Donlevie, 2011). ADP has since been able to track the progress of each state; through a survey that is conducted, annually. Their report, “Closing the Expectations Gap: An Annual 50-State Progress Report on the Alignment of High School Policies with the Demands of College and Careers,” indicates the status of high school

standards, graduation requirements, assessments, and accountability systems (Achieve, 2008). The National Education Summit on High Schools and the American Diploma Project, implore educators to redesign high schools with 21st Century standards (Donlevie, 2011).

The Silent Epidemic

Civic Enterprises, in association with Peter D. Hart Research Associates for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, generated “The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Dropouts.” This study is most intriguing because it was able to grasp the perceptions of dropouts, by speaking with the dropouts themselves. Conducted in 2005, the research methodology included focus group interviews of 467 ethnically and racially diverse students, ranging from the ages of 16 through 25, and who had dropped out of public high schools throughout the country, including large cities, suburbs, and small towns (Donlevie, 2011). The *Silent Epidemic* refers to the documented one-third of all public high school students who fail to graduate with their class, with the number approaching 50% for African-American, Hispanic, and Native American students (Donlevie, 2011). More importantly, it highlights the fact that most students believed they were capable of graduating (Bridgeland et al., 2006). Although the respondents gave a variety of reasons for dropping out of school, the majority (8%) believed that more engaging teaching and curricula, along with increased relevance between school and work, would likely encourage students to remain in school. For educators, *The Silent Epidemic* is clear:

Instead of the one-size fits all, school districts should develop options for students, including a curriculum that connects what they are learning in the classroom with real life experiences and with work, smaller learning communities with more individualized instruction, and alternative schools that offer specialized programs to students at-risk of dropping out. (Bridgeland et al., 2006, p. 5)

In 2004, Achieve Inc. published a study that clearly exposed an educational gap between high school course requirements and college and workplace ready skills. To close the expectations gap, Achieve Inc. and the National Governor's Association hosted the 2005 National Education Summit on High Schools and distributed *An Action Agenda for Improving America's High Schools*. The Summit's action declared that although students successfully meet state requirements, and therefore graduate from high school, not all graduates are adequately prepared for post-high school success (Donlevie, 2011). Furthermore, "71% of student's nationwide graduate from high school and of those who go on to college, approximately one-third must complete remedial courses" (p. 3). In addition, "Even though the United States has one of the highest college enrollment rates in the world, our college completion rate is average to below average among development countries" (Achieve & National Governor's Association, 2005, p. 4).

Why Credit recovery Programs are Important

According to a 2012 data report from Florida Virtual School (FLVS), 53% of students self-reporting as credit recovery enrollments were successful in obtaining credit recovery in their first attempt. Of that 43% who were unsuccessful, 18% reenrolled for the same credit but only 18% of those students were successful in their second attempt

(Gonzalez, 2012). While numbers were not available for other large-scale credit recovery providers like K12 or Apex, it is not outside of the existing data to believe they face similar difficulties assisting students to successful completion (Zinith, 2011). Much of the existing research shows that the common approach for current credit recovery is not as effective as hoped for.

The graduation rate of the “17-year-old” first began to be tracked by the federal government, in 1977. This was a change in how graduation was calculated, moving from counting school reported dropouts to counting the number of students entering ninth grade against the number of students graduating four years later (Scott, 2014). This classified students needing extra time to graduate as dropouts causing the perceived graduation rate to plummet (Heckman & LaFontaine, 2010). High stakes testing came to dominate the educational climate, which had a negative effect on graduation rates, especially rates for lower socioeconomic, minority, and at-risk students (Human Resources Research Organization, 2007). The slow decline of vocational education due to funding cuts as well as general social stigma also sunk graduation rates (Benavot, 1983). These three elements combine to depress graduation rates by not including students who graduate early or late but still graduate and gives no place in society for those who wish to pursue vocation rather than academia (Heckman & LaFontaine, 2010). Students who chose to pursue vocational education, for example, were forced into a four-year academic cycle. If these students are unsuccessful in completing their high school diploma in four years, according to state calculations they are accounted in the drop out percentages even though they are still actively pursuing a diploma (Heckman & LaFontaine, 2010).

The existence of the fifth year high school student became a dilemma in the educational context, after this recalculation. These students were affecting school, district, and state dropout rates thus creating negative press (Bruckerhoff, 1988). If schools and districts were already receiving the negative effects of a higher dropout rate for fifth-year seniors, it made little sense to focus time and resources necessary for credit recovery on those students to ensure their eventual graduation (Gonzalez, 2012). To accommodate these students and increase the school or district's ratings by improving graduation rates, public education has turned to largely toward online credit recovery (Gabriel, 2011) possibly explaining the upturn in graduation rates since it became a widespread option around 2005. Apex Learning (2012) and Florida Virtual School [FLVS] (2012) both report high percentages of credit recovery students inside of exponentially expanding enrollment numbers (Citterman as cited in McCabe & St. Andrie, 2012; Florida Press Kit, 2014).

There are some similarities of students needing credit recovery, and students being at-risk. Credit recovery is needed when a student drops or fails a course. Students are more likely to be at-risk when they fail more than one class. Conversely, a student may be identified as at-risk due to a variety of factors despite not having failed a single class (Watson & Gemin, 2008). Schools have had the autonomy in determining how they want to implement the credit recovery program, at the local level. Schools have opted to implement the credit recovery programs during school hours, after regular school hours, during Saturday School, computer-based instruction, student-teacher correspondence, and through online learning.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) mandated that states establish a set of annual objectives that ensure opportunity for increased student achievement (Virginia Department of Education INFO, 2010). According to NCLB, schools are required to meet annual yearly progress (AYP), which includes graduation rates that increase annually. School systems across the country have searched for programs to assist students in meeting graduation requirements (NCLB, 2001).

Some educational reformers now view supplemental online learning and the creation of virtual schools as viable options to traditional schools and an innovative means of educating K-12 students (Holstead, Spradlin, & Plucker, 2008). Struggling students are offered the opportunity to recover credit online while maintaining concurrent enrollment in brick-and-mortar schools (Pettyjohn, 2012).

A report from the U.S. General Accounting Office (2002) summarized dropout prevention programs in a similar way:

While dropout prevention programs can vary widely, they tend to cluster around three main approaches: (1) supplemental services for at-risk students; (2) different forms of alternative education for students who do not do well in regular classrooms; and (3) school-wide restructuring efforts for all students. (p. 17)

Goals related to credit recovery and at-risk students vary with each online program often they include one or more of the following:

- Help students make up credits to meet graduation requirements;
- Meet graduation deadlines;
- Prepare students for state exams;

- Get dropout students back in school;
- Provide educational equity for all students;
- Meet budgetary concerns while trying to serve all students. (Wisconsin Virtual School, 2016)

Statement of the Problem

In recent years, a large metropolitan school within the Southeastern United States has been the recipient of two very prestigious awards. However, the graduation rate within this school district is 75%. Mathematically, this means that 1 out of 4 students within a cohort does not graduate. The graduation rate at the school where this study is based for the 2013-2014 school year was 83.6%.

In order to improve the graduation rate throughout the district, schools must begin to focus on that 1 out of 4 who has not graduated from high school. This school sought to improve its graduation rate to 90% for the 2014-2015 school year. Credit recovery is the next option. Traditionally schools have promoted various methods for recouping credits. Some options have been through online programs; programs that are split between teacher instruction and online modules; summer school; and the participation in after hour learning. All of these options come with a cost. Many students cannot afford to pay the financial costs that are associated with these credit recovery options. Some programs require \$150-\$250 per course. Time is also a huge cost. Many students who fall into this category of having to participate in credit recovery, often times have other obligations that require their time and participation; outside of regular school hours.

One particular program that has been adopted by a local school is a credit recovery program through the use of Georgia Virtual Schools. Georgia Virtual Schools offers a teacher led, virtual classroom atmosphere. Focusing on the 2011 Cohort (2015 graduating class), 138 students were identified as off-track for graduation (students are identified as off-track if they fail one or more courses). Through the Georgia Virtual School, these 138 students were given the opportunity to recoup credits by completing online modules. Through the adoption of this program, students had the opportunity to recoup credits during school hours, for free of charge. Students were enrolled in this credit recovery program if they had previously failed a course with a 60-69%. Participants completed online modules, daily, during lunch and advisement. The local school designated the computers in the Media Center, during this specific time for the use of the credit recovery students.

The goal of this program is to allow students to recoup credits and get back on track to graduate. Assistance is also provided to students through the use of peer tutoring. An administrator and counselors provide academic support to the participants as well.

Use of Cohort

For the purpose of this study, the effectiveness of the credit recovery program will be measured based off how many credits are recouped. These credits are particularly centered on the students who entered high school in 2012. This group of students is also known as the 2012 Cohort. The graduation rate for the 2015-2016 school year will be affected by the number of 2012 Cohort students who entered high school in 2012 and graduated in 2016. Students who are eligible for Credit recovery complete online

modules through Georgia Virtual Schools and receive credit for courses that they were unsuccessful in the first time taking them.

Credit Recovery Process

At the beginning of the 2014-2015 school year, there was a change in administration at the research site. The new administrative team sat down and looked at the data, highlighting the school's performance in the years prior. One piece of data that stood out was the graduation rate, and how low it was. The research site is a high school within a school district who has received many award; particularly, 2-time recipient of the Broad Prize. It is alarming that the district has a graduation rate of approximately 75%. The graduation rate at the research site for the previous school years was 83.6%. Administrators decided that there needed to be a shift in the focus, on getting more students across the stage at graduation. This meant there had to be a plan in place to support students who were behind in credits or had failed a grade level in the past. The graduation rate is affected by the number of years it takes a freshman to graduate. The job of any school leader, particularly at the high school level, is to ensure that students graduate within four years of the year that they entered high school as a ninth grader. Once the plan was discussed, the administration team showed the data to the staff (graduation rate, success rates, EOC data, Cohort Analyzer, etc.). The administration decided to address the issue of students failing courses by implementing credit recovery during the school day. Credit recovery is being run through Georgia Virtual Schools.

Prior to implementing credit recovery, the administration team had to look at how they wanted to structure the program. They needed to create a schedule that would

accommodate the students needing to participate in credit recovery, and also not penalize those who did not. The school adopted a 7-period school day, where 7th period would be advisement. The school renamed the advisement time to “Ram Time.” The school’s mascot is a “Ram,” hence the name. Ram Time is held daily during the last 20 minutes of the day. Ram Time serves multiple purposes:

1. Students who participate in clubs can be with their sponsors on a daily basis, reducing the amount of time needed for after-school meetings.
2. Athletic teams and band members can be with their coaches/directors. Students can review the agenda for the day, get dressed, and have their snack. They can then begin their practices promptly at their designated start times.
3. Teachers were given a survey about their personal hobbies. Some hobbies included cooking, reading, video gaming, guitar playing, etc. Students then were given a survey to see which activity they would like to participate in during the last 20 minutes of the school day. Each student’s schedule listed the 7th period class for attendance purposes. All students were required to attend their 7th period class.
4. Students who have been identified as off-track for graduating with their cohort, whether for missing credits or being held back a grade, participate in credit recovery. During Ram Time, these identified students go to a specific computer lab under the guidance of a certified teacher, and complete online modules through Georgia Virtual School.

There is an administrator that works directly with the credit recovery program. When students take a course for the first time but do not pass it with at least a 70%, the

administrator will then meet with the student and the parent to inform them of the new initiative the school has to get students back on-track to graduate. All of the important details of the program and guidance on how to best support the student at home are shared with the parent. Prior to being paired with a specific course to makeup, students must create a log-in. Participants work through online modules using Georgia Virtual Schools. Students must complete each course that they are enrolled in within six weeks or pay a \$25 re-enrollment fee. The program is free of charge, prior to having to pay the re-enrollment fee. This same process takes place for students who failed courses in previous years with a grade between 60-69%.

The administrator does weekly check-ins with the participants, encouraging them to work diligently on the online modules. Their progress is constantly monitored by administration, credit recovery teachers, and the counselors. Upon completion of credit recover, the administrator works with the counselor and district level official to get the grade transcribed on the student's transcript. The administration constantly checks the Cohort Analyzer, comparing the list of students who did district consider being off-track, to the list that the local has; and the projected school graduation rate that the district has, versus what the school has calculated. The Cohort Analyzer provides the school with an up-to-date status of each student with the cohort.

This model helped the school improve their graduation rate, and meet their school goal of obtaining a graduation rate of 90%. Most importantly, students were able to recoup credits, free of charge, without having to attend summer school. However, there was a spike in discipline referrals for students being AWOL (skipping their Ram Time).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of a specific credit recovery program as it relates to improving the graduation rate. The study compared credit recovery programs from 4 different schools within a large metropolitan school district within the Southeastern United States. In particular, this study compared program outcomes and evaluated how parental support, peer support, and advisement support directly impacts the overall success of the program. More specifically, this study sought to determine if there is a difference in the graduation rate of the district based on the credit recovery program offered at a specific local high school.

Costs, seat time, online vs. blended, and levels convenience were all factors that were evaluated from the parent's perspective. The graduation rate for the 2014-2015 school year was finalized on September 25, 2015. For the purpose of this study, the effectiveness of the program was measured by the number of credits that were recouped by a student participating in credit recovery for the 2015-2016 school year.

Nearly 30% of U.S. students fail to graduate from high school within four years, if at all, with the number approaching 50% for African-American, Hispanic, and Native American students (WestEd, 2007). Students, who have been unsuccessful in the traditional classroom setting, have a lack of options for success. Various students face time constraints caused by approaching graduation dates, health related issues, stress associated with home life or from personal situations. The causes of a growing need for credit recovery are supported by state and personal factors. Unfortunately, the data show that as many as two-thirds of students enrolled in online credit recovery do not complete the program in a reasonable time if at all (Zinith, 2011) coupled with an average yield

rate (the percentage of students completing their course enrollment) hovering around 50% for online courses (Gonzalez, 2012), which is also mirrored in online college course yields (Tyler-Smith, 2006). These facts coagulate together to suggest that the lack of a specific, pedagogically researched approach to credit recovery may be causing credit recovery to be unsuccessful in providing students with feasible means for obtaining credit.

The need for an organized credit recovery program that allows students to recoup credits to remain on-track for graduation is very much needed in most if not all school districts. According to the International Association for K-12 Online Learning (n.d.), presently forty-five states have significant supplemental online learning programs, or significant full-time programs (in which students take most, or all, of their course online), or both. In addition, 50% of the United States' public secondary schools provide online learning access to students, and over 70% of school districts with distance education programs plan to expand their online offerings in the coming year (Donlevie, 2011). "Distance education can mean lowered dropout rates and increased graduation rates" (Brenner, 2007, p. 33). In addition, "Using computers to deliver instruction can help to correct inequities in educational opportunities that exist due to race/ethnicity, budget constraints, geographical location, income, school size, and substandard teaching" (Blaylock & Newman, 2005, p. 373). In most schools, both traditional and virtual, there is not a specific policy to address the special needs of credit recovery students at this time (Scott, 2014). The problem is related to these other organizational issues: rigor, accreditation, alignment of curriculum with standards (Scott, 2014). The lack of policy and process is a problem for the following reasons:

1. Schools must provide standards-based curriculum to ensure accreditation; if credit recovery is not organized thusly, schools risk losing accreditation (SACSCASI, 2011).
2. Without a systematic approach to credit recovery, programs run the risk of being not rigorous enough to successfully prepare students for End of Course (EOC) exams or another accountability testing thus forcing students to repeat mastered skills.
3. At-risk high school students burdened with repetition of mastered skills are put at a higher drop out risk due to their inability, perceived or real, to make up skills (Jacob & Lefgren, 2007).

In an educational environment ruled by choice, lack of success with students can result in loss of enrollments translating directly into loss of revenue for the school as expressed by a loss of full-time enrollment (FTE) state funding. Regardless of whether a class is for credit recovery or simply for credit, the proper amount of rigor combined with the alignment of curriculum and standards create the conditions for state accreditation (Scott, 2014). The largest accreditation organization in the southeast, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACSCASI), considers curriculum alignment indicators as key pieces of accreditation:

Indicator 3.2: The school's curriculum provides equitable and challenging learning experiences that ensure all students have sufficient opportunities to develop learning, thinking, and life skills that lead to success at the next level. (SACSCASI, 2011)

Curriculum, instruction and assessment are monitored and adjusted systematically in response to data from multiple assessments of student learning and an examination of professional practice. (SACSCASI, 2011)

If a school is seeking accreditation, they must be able to provide a challenging learning experience to all students enrolled in credit recovery, as well as to students who are not enrolled in credit recovery. Courses that students have received credit in will not be accepted by other institutions, without accreditation.

Research Questions

RQ1: Is there a difference in the graduation rate of a selected high school based on the implementation of a credit recovery program and the graduation rate prior to the implementation of the program?

RQ2: Is there a significant relationship between parental support and the academic achievement of students in a credit recovery program at a selected high school?

RQ3: Is there a significant relationship between administrative support and student achievement at a specific high school?

RQ4: Is there a significant relationship between teacher support and student achievement at a specific high school?

RQ5: Does student motivation affect the success rates for credit recovery?

RQ6: Is there a significant relationship between student preference for online vs traditional delivery methods, and student achievement?

RQ7: How much do parents know about the credit recovery program at their child's school?

Significance of the Study

The findings from this study may be of significant value to school leaders. The findings can be used for school improvement as it relates to increasing the graduation rate and providing additional instructional interventions to the students who have gotten off-track for graduation.

Graduation rates can be impacted in a negative manner due to current students falling behind on their credits. Credit recovery programs offer an additional avenue for allowing current students to recover credits and hence, will get the student back on track to graduate with their cohort. Graduating students with their cohort improves the graduation rate. This study focused on the costs, convenience as it relates to time, academic support, and parental support of a credit recovery program.

This research created data for schools to use when determining the most effective option for implementing a credit recovery program at the local school level. This study is also vital to all stakeholders involved in educating students. Parents will understand the importance of parental involvement, and the impact they have on the graduation outcome of their students. This study provided a framework for administrators to utilize within their local buildings to increase student academic achievement. The outcomes that were a result from this research can be used to help facilitate a positive learning environment for other students.

Summary

This study sought to examine specific components of four credit recovery programs and the success they have on improving the graduation rate at each school. Within this school district, there are several methods of credit recovery that are promoted. Examples of the disadvantages of each program include: students must have their own technology; courses are online only; students can only take one course per mini-semester; students must provide their own transportation; courses are fast-paced; enrollment in some programs result in long school days; not all classes are offered; and costs range from \$100-\$150 per course.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter reviews the literature that is relevant to both the independent and dependent variables as they relate to parent satisfaction. This review discusses the role of the credit recovery program at a local high school within a large metropolitan school district within the Southeastern United States. The study shows the advantages and the importance on a credit recovery program and how it can improve the graduation rate. The literature is reviewed under the following headings: virtual learning, graduation rate, parental support, administrative advisement support, and peer support.

Virtual Learning/Credit Recovery

Most would agree that virtual schools have arrived, challenging our notions about school and schooling (Greenway & Vanourek, 2006). In 2009, the U.S. Department of Education performed a meta-analysis and review of online learning studies and found that “classes with online learning (whether taught completely online or blended) on average produce stronger student learning outcomes than do classes with solely face-to-face instruction” (Means, Toyama, Murphy, Bakia, & Jones, 2009, p. 18). There are many factors that play a role in both online and face-to-face courses. These factors include additional learning time, materials, and opportunities. Online and face-to-face conditions generally differed on multiple dimensions, including a number of time learners spent on

task (Means et al., 2009). Nevertheless, there is a need for further investigation into the differences in a traditional and online classroom.

The main differences that exist between online and traditional classrooms, is time, learning, and technology. Students who take online courses have more flexibility when it comes to attending class and completing assignments. In fact, Cavanaugh (2009) noted that distance learning can expand school learning time—a concept generally used to refer to the lengthening of the school day and/or year, or by supplementing class time with extracurricular activities. There is a strong possibility that student performance can be increased when the time allocated for learning is expanded. Allen and Seaman (2007) surveyed more than 2,500 U.S. colleges and universities and relayed that “academic leaders cite the need for more discipline on the part of online students as the most critical barrier” to widespread adoption of online programs (p. 3). Their documented conclusions in an *Online Nation: Five Years of Growth in Online Learning* appear even more alarming when one considers that the information pertains to college students (Donlevie, 2011). High school students who participate in online learning will struggle significantly more. Even so, the U. S. Department of Education (USDOE) supports asynchronous discourse, claiming it promotes self-reflection that often results in more impactful learning (Harlent & Doubler, 2004; Hiltz & Goldman, 2005; Jaffee et al., 2006 as cited in Means et al., 2009).

Published by the Center for American Progress and written in conjunction with the Broad Foundation, Cavanaugh (2009) listed a variety of online advantages in her work entitled, *Getting Students More Learning Time Online*. The author portrayed the virtual experience as being student-centered and self-paced, preventing boredom that

often occurs in a traditional classroom (Donlevie, 2011). In fact, she argued that the self-managed course structures enable learners to expand their knowledge, as needed while having the teacher's support throughout (Cavanaugh, 2009). Cavanaugh reinforced the notion of differentiated instruction which encourages teachers to adapt learning to individual student needs and abilities and claimed that it is even more possible via an online course.

Graduation Rate

Data reported by schools suggest that credit-recovery programs may have positive effects on earning credits toward graduation, attendance rates, and passing rates on state standardized tests (Trautman & Lawrence, 2004). This has been shown to be true empirically by a study done at Oak Glen High School in West Virginia where students who were in need of credit recovery participated in an educational opportunity program once a week that was both competency based and had a very small class size (New York Comprehensive Center Educational Technology Team, 2012). The graduation rate increased to 90% following the implementation of this program. In addition to a study conducted by Pape, Revenaugh, and Wicks (2007), students at the Virtual High School that were using an online learning system similar to those given to students in credit recovery programs saw an increase in both promotion rates of the students who were recovering credits in summer school, and a higher than average pass rate on the Advanced Placement (66% versus the national average of 62%) indicating the effectiveness of these online programs.

Boston Public Schools (BPS) has recently released data showing that they are continuously improving their four-year graduation rate; reaching a current all-time high. Of the students from the 2007 Cohort, 64,4% graduated within four years. These 2011 figures show an increase of 1.2 percentage points from 2010 and more than 6 percentage points since 2007. The data also show the district's graduation rate is 6 percentage points higher as a result of credit recovery initiative (BPS Communications Office, 2013).

The exact reasons for this increase in graduation rate are not very clear but there is a combination of aspects that makes the BPS Credit Skills Recovery Program (CSRP) a successful one (UMass Donahue Institute, Research and Evaluation Group, 2012):

- Relationship building with the students was one of the key findings from the implementation of CSRP that contributed to the success of the program.
- Teachers went beyond their official duties to spend time with the students to provide support and encouragement.
- There were case managers who were in constant contact with students even after the course, during the summer to make sure that their progress was being monitored and to provide support around challenges students were facing.
- Apex Learning was chosen as the online course provider for the program and students and teachers both rated the quality and rigor of the curriculum as being very high.
- Students enrolled in fewer CSRP courses had higher rates of completion.

- Students felt that the history, English, and foreign language courses were easier to complete than the math and science courses. Therefore, knowing this, the program coordinators ensured that additional supports were available.

Through these efforts, the study skills of the students improved. Students were also motivated even more to continue to strive to do well in their courses so that they could again be eligible for graduation.

Parental Support

Studies have been conducted by educational researchers using Bronfenbrenner's ecological human development theory (cited in Grolnick et al., 1997) to show the relationship between parental support and student success. Parental engagement can positively impact student performance at school and at home. Parental involvement ranges from helping with homework and reading with and to the child at home, to activities such as attending parent-teacher conferences, open house, back-to-school nights, and other school and home activities that promote intellectual growth such as taking their children to the library and to museums (Stevenson & Baker, 1987). Parent involvement also includes parents monitoring the academic progress of their children at school (Grolnick et al., 1997).

Epstein (1987) developed a concept called Spheres of Influence. The spheres were referenced through the child, parent/family, and the community in a partnership model that is wide-ranging and interactive and covers the broadest range of involvement that supports children's growth and academic success. Epstein identified the following six types of involvement:

1. **Parenting.** Parental support at home that supports the child's success at school. This includes activities such as ensuring that a child gets enough sleep, eats breakfast, and gets to school on time.
2. **Communicating.** Communication about school programs and the student's academic progress and achievement between home-school and school-home. Newsletters from the school, telephone conversations between parent and teacher, parent-teacher conferences, and other such activities fall in this category.
3. **Volunteering.** All parents are provided with multiple varieties of opportunities to volunteer and become actively engaged with the school. Parents assisting in the classroom, at the school library or lunchroom, or accompanying the class during field trips fall in this arena.
4. **Learning at Home.** The school/teacher provides learning activities for parents to engage in with their children at home. Projects such as family histories and interviews and projects that involve the parent fall in this category.
5. **Decision Making.** Parents are invited, trained, and actively participate in decision-making committees such as the School Site Council, English Learner Advisory Committee, or Parent/Teacher Association.
6. **Community Collaboration.** There is coordination with community partners to provide resources, services, and information for students and their families. When schools host health fairs or college and career fairs, they are engaging in this category of involvement (Epstein, 1987).

Multiple studies confirm that parents' involvement and support provide their children with the ability to be more successful in academic endeavors such as obtaining higher grades and test scores, enrolling in higher level programs and classes, increasing school attendance, developing better social skills, exhibiting appropriate behavior, graduating from high school, and continuing on to higher education (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). The theoretical and conceptual basis most studies have worked from is that parent and teacher expectations affect student academic achievement and that school and family behaviors affect learning outcomes for pupils (Redding, 2002; Epstein, 2005). When teachers and school leaders encourage and support engagement, parents report having the skills necessary to assist their children at home (Ames, 1993); students showed significant academic gains in reading in comparison to teachers who did not report parent involvement as a strategy they valued for student achievement (Epstein, 1991).

As a result of years of research and collaboration with school partners across the United States, Joyce Epstein, developer of the conceptual framework for the six types of parent involvement, examined the most effective practices for the school and teacher to aid the parent in developing supportive skills to assist their child (Epstein, 2005). Epstein was able to establish a partnership with schools across the United States through the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) at Johns Hopkins University. Through this partnership, over 1000 schools have been able to use Epstein's research-based strategies to develop home-school partnerships. Data on reading, math, and writing scores as well as behavior from Title I elementary student, were compiled over a three-year study using Epstein's model. The results from this three-year study showed that the home, parent, and community partnership model is effective. Students made considerable

gains in all areas compared to similar schools not participating in the program (Epstein, 2005). A longitudinal study of the effect of parent involvement and student achievement in reading, math, and science has also taken place through the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS). This was a five-year study with a sample that included 400 elementary, middle, and high schools throughout rural, urban, and suburban communities. Data collected included standardized tests to verify the positive effect of parent involvement on student achievement (Epstein, Sanders, & Sheldon, 2007).

Jeynes' (2005) meta-analysis of 77 research studies, including over 300,000 students, reviewed the characteristics of standardized tests along with grades, school attendance, and teacher-rated assessments and found that the overall outcomes were .5 to .6 of a standard deviation high than students whose parents were not involved in home-school communication and activities. Although the study reported a decrease in the impact of parental involvement as students go on to middle and high school, the positive effect of parental involvement is still significant (Jeynes, 2005; Epstein, Sanders, & Sheldon, 2007).

Parent-Teacher Communication

The U.S. Department of Education funded a study for 71 Title I schools that examined the impact that standards-based instructional practices had on student achievement. The study was aimed at analyzing the relationship between student academic achievement and visibility and focus of standards and assessments, basic or advanced teaching techniques, teacher preparation and teachers' skills in math instruction, teachers' rating of professional development received, districts' standards

practices, and outreach to parents (Hernandez, 2011). Outreach to parents was measured by the number of times that the teacher communicated with the parents of a struggling/failing student. The teacher can communicate with the parent via face-to-face meetings, sending progress reports home, and by phone. Results from this study showed that in schools that had good parent-teacher communication, there was an improvement in math and reading scores. At the schools where teachers reported a high frequency of parent contact and outreach, the student achievement scores were 40% higher than at the schools where teachers reported low levels of parent contact and outreach (Westat & Policy Studies Associates, 2001).

Engaging Parents

There have been a number of factors identified that impact student achievement. Of those factors, parental and home lives are highlighted. These have come to be called “the curriculum of the home” and include such factors as daily family conversations, monitoring of television viewing time and programs, open displays of affection, learning to delay gratification, print and literacy activities that are engaging, and high parental interest in the child’s academic and character growth (Hernandez, 2011). Other parental behaviors that support academic growth are high expectations and a structure for homework completion and school preparation (Jeynes, 2005; Redding, 2002; Epstein, 2005).

Parent involvement has multiple components and each component has multiple aspects (Epstein, 2005; Jeynes, 2005; 2007; Colombo, 2006; Redding, 2002). When one looks back and analyzes past studies, one can assume that achievement gains are

maximized when there exists an authoritative parent, high expectations for learning, and a focus on literacy activities. The single-parent involvement aspect with the largest effect size is parental expectations (Keller, 2006; Jeynes, 2005). With parental expectations having the highest effect on academic achievement, it would seem that parents from low socioeconomic levels and language and racial minorities can help their children close the achievement gap (Hernandez, 2011).

The learning of the students and the relationships that are formed between the school-parents-community can be impacted by the environment of the school. In schools that are successfully meeting the needs of its students, the relationship between the school and the home are more on the positive side. In a study that explored the quality of relationships between the parents and teachers in 63 elementary and middle schools, surveys were completed by 1,571 teachers and 12,364 parents (Redding, 2008). Eighty-four percent of Hispanic parents held a rosier view of their relationships with the teachers and the school environment than African-American parents (72%), and white parents (80%). When parents answered an item about encouraging their children to read for pleasure, 79% of the parents agreed that they did so while only 26% of teachers responded that they believed the parents did so (Redding, 2008). The findings of this study demonstrate the need for more meaningful dialogue between parents and the school in order to make decisions that mutually support students (Redding, 2008).

Administrative Advisement Support

Credit recovery programs offer students the chance to learn at their own pace, make their own schedules, and receive a more individualized education to help them

master concepts so that they can perform better in the courses for which they were not able to originally receive credit (New York Comprehensive Center Educational Technology Team, 2012). By implementing strategies such as the role of teachers and support staff helping students progress through their classes, individualizing instruction through the affordances of technology, ensuring that students have ongoing access to the technology they need (Roblyer, Davis, Mills, Marshall, & Pape, 2008) and specific instructional strategies that support achievement, programs serving the needs of students who may be “at-risk” have defined successful outcomes in a variety of ways. All of these outcomes deal with the progress that students make while enrolled in various courses and as a participant in the Virtual School Program.

“The world wide web has caused the biggest change in education and learning since the advent of the printed book a little over 500 years ago” (Draves, 2000, para. 8). During times of rapid change, it is hard for some people to adapt. They struggle with their methods, beliefs, and values; and are often times defensive. Individuals are less likely to take risks especially in the alternative delivery of online education (Robinson, 2000). Draves (2000) stated that policies and procedures to address critical issues would increase the adoption of online programs.

Students were often grouped by their ability levels in the past. Special education students (students who have an Individual Education Plan [IEP]) were expected to show growth in mathematics and language arts on all state assessments. Students who did not receive services and happened to fall behind were grouped in replacement curriculums. Other students were placed in accelerating curriculums that were not considered remedial curriculums (No Child Left Behind –What About Mine, 2009). With the implementation

of NCLB, the expectations that educators have about students has increased. The raising of the academic achievement of all students has resulted as a result of NCLB. Under NCLB, school leaders are able to ensure that all students are exposed to a rigorous academic curriculum.

Husmann and Miller (2001) provided studies that focused on administrators' perspectives of effective programs. According to Willment and Onstad (2009), most educators and state leaders lack knowledge of the effective web-based instruction and the critical need for student success. These leaders are resistant to new and alternative ways of instruction and student learning that online courses bring to the education system (Brown, 2011). The more recent trends in education suggest that technology and online instruction is centered on student learning. This is highlighted because most trends in education focus on the teacher teaching.

In 2007, the North American Council for Online Learning (NACOL) reported that 42 states provided online learning programs for students who take at least two or more courses online (Brown, 2011). It still may be difficult for this type of research to develop, due to the lack of literature evaluating such programs within K-12 online programs. This creates scientifically based research barriers necessary for educational leaders to move forward in the online education spectrum (Watson & Ryan, 2007).

When establishing a credit recovery program, an initial step should be to create a support team. The purpose of the support team is to provide the school and district with a clear understanding of the direction and goals of the program. There are many approaches to setting up a credit recovery program. Depending on the needs of the school, programs may require teacher and mentors to provide face time support. In Tigua Independent

Schools, El Paso, Texas, the credit recovery program was designed as a 1:1 laptop credit recovery program for migrant students whose parents worked at the local farms in El Paso and southern New Mexico (Levy, 2011). To support this program, schools within this school district created a credit recovery team. The team met weekly with the students that were enrolled in online courses. Through these weekly meetings, they were able to provide support and monitor students' progress. Students were motivated to complete their assignments because of the meetings with the support team. There were also coordinators (administrators) who evaluated the program as a whole and looked at student results to determine how beneficial the program was to its students. The Project MAS study (Levy, 2011) identified the strong need for some face-to-face interaction to help motivate students.

The role of the teacher within credit recovery is highly focused on at the North Carolina Virtual Public School (NCVPS). Teachers work with each individual student that participates in credit recovery to design an individualized education plan. The plan is designed to ensure that the courses in which they are enrolled meet each individual student's needs. During this process, teachers are given the opportunity to learn about each student's personal circumstances so that they can serve as mentors and offer a sense of motivation for them to want to continue with the credit recovery program in order to graduate with their cohort. Once the teacher gets to know each student well, s/he will know how to motivate an individual student to ensure that they have the inclination to complete the program (*Tampa Bay Times*, 2011). Figure 2 shows the NCVPS Credit Recovery Unit's Instructional Flow (North Carolina Virtual Public School, 2010).

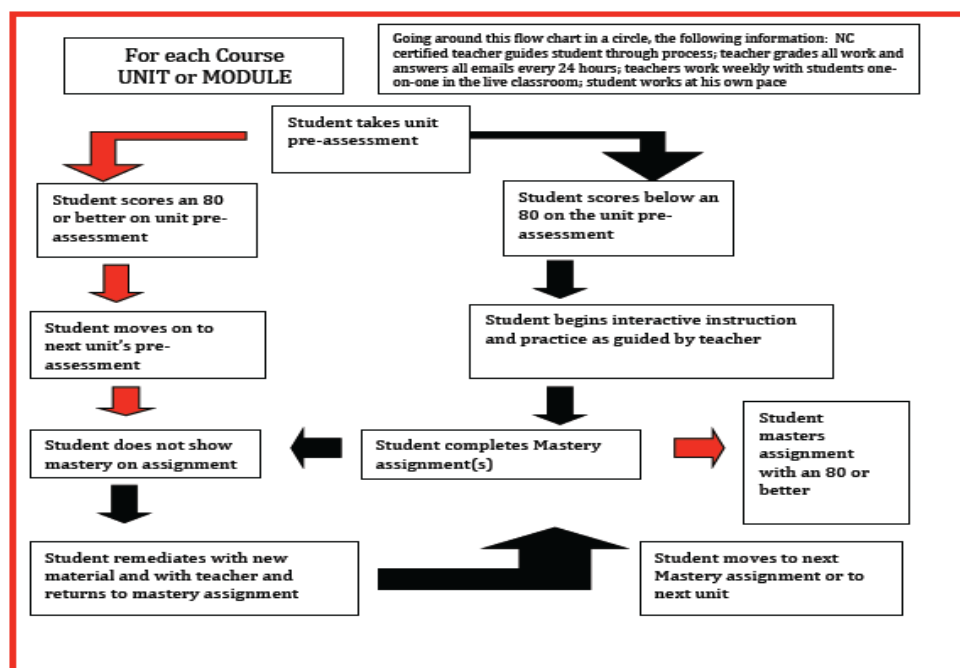


Figure 2: NCVPS credit recovery unit's instructional flow.

Effective Pedagogical Approaches for Teachers

The success of struggling high school seniors is supported by the DeSoto County Board of Education, through the use of the APEX Learning web-based curriculum. The DeSoto County Board of Education believes that it is important for the staff that works with the credit recovery students, is thoroughly trained and equipped with the tools needed to support the needs of the students. APEX Learning has a technical support helpline to ensure that teachers and administrators are assisted with any issues that may arise before or during the course (DeSoto County Board of Education, 2009). Through the use of this web-based curriculum, district administrators and teachers are able to come up with strategies and best-practices that will support the students. Their model for this plan is shown in Figure 3 (Apex Learning, 2012).



Figure 3: APEX Learning web-based curriculum.

Florida Virtual School [FLVS] (2012) has a collection of instructional tools to help teachers learn new skills and strategies to use in the classroom or online to better support and engage their students. The suite of resources includes a teaching online series which is a collection of resources designed for classroom teachers who are new to online learning and a separate set of resources for teachers who are more experienced. These resources focus on enhancing teachers' skills to help them optimize instruction.

1. **Teaching in an Online Learning Model:** These five models of content outline the essential elements of successful online instruction.
2. **Advanced Strategies for Online or Blended Instruction:** This five-module course is a follow up to the basic course on teaching online and supports the learning needs of teachers using technology and teaching in virtual environments.

3. Teaching Literacy Strategies in an Online or Blended Learning Model:

This six-module course provides a comprehensive solution to assist struggling readers in the online classroom

Peer Support

As educators are confronted with having to improve student achievement in mathematics and implementing school, district, state, or federal changes, there may also be an increase in the area of limited instructional time. A possible solution to the limited instructional time may be to rely on peer tutoring. “In a peer tutoring program, one student teacher another in a school setting” (Allen, 2011, p. 16). Individualized tutoring can adapt to the student’s learning style, pace, and level of understanding (Snow, 2005). The peer tutoring model designation is determined by the tutoring process and the reason for student pairings. Peer tutoring models include, but are not limited to, cross-ability, cross-age, and reciprocal peer tutoring (Dame, 2012).

Students can serve as tutors for other students, with proper training. Training sessions often include a discussion of goals, behavior and academic problem-solving strategies, and appropriate feedback and reinforcement strategies (Miller, Barbetta, & Herron, 1994). Tutors become models of appropriate behavior, organizing work, asking questions, demonstrating self-management, encouraging social interaction, and facilitating better study habits (Gordon, Morgan, O’Malley, & Ponticell, 2006). Strikingly, student tutors often benefit as much or more than their tutees (Maheady & Gard, 2010). As such, peer tutoring is often an effective educational strategy for classrooms of diverse learners because it promotes student engagement (Gordon et al.,

2006), academic gains (Maheady & Gard, 2010), and the total amount of academic learning time available (Gordon et al., 2006).

Through a methodologically sound, quasi-experimental study, Allsopp (1997) examined the effectiveness of class wide peer tutoring on mathematics problem-solving skills in a heterogeneous, eighth grade, pre-algebra class. The author reported that peer tutoring (class wide) serves as an effective instructional technique. However, classroom peer tutoring does not yield any greater results than independent learning. For this particular study, three Florida middle schools were used; 262 students from 14 different general mathematics classes participated in the study. Subsequently, the teachers in the experimental group then trained their students “to use the appropriate tutoring behaviors necessary for assisting others in learning the academic/cognitive skill” (Allsopp, 1997, p. 368). Often, these training sessions include a discussion of goals, behavior and academic problem-solving strategies, and appropriate feedback and reinforcement strategies (Miller, Barbetta, & Heron, 1994). Students participated in tutoring sessions for 30 minutes, 2 to 4 times per week, for a total of 18 sessions.

Tutoring Intervention

The staff at the School of Biology and Ecology at the University of Maine had to come up with alternatives to assist their students in BIO 100, which is an introductory-level biology course, with the necessary tools to be successful throughout their programs. BIO 100 served as a pre-requisite for future coursework that many of the students in the School of Biology and Ecology would have to take for their respective majors. The staff found that many of their students were not mastering the concepts in the course. Mean

standardized test scores are around the 60th percentile (Scholastic Aptitude Test [SAT]: 1063.2; American College Testing [ACT]: 23.7) (Batz, 2014).

For two years, the BIO 100 professors were awarded a Faculty Course Modification Incentive Grant offered by the Main Physical Sciences Partnership (NSF DUE 0962805) (Batz, 2014). Through this grant, science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) faculty modeled best practices for modifying their courses; to improve student outcomes. Participating professors also are given additional support from the Maine Learning Assistant program. The Maine Learning Assistant program is the University of Maine's implementation of the Colorado Learning Assistant Model (Colorado Learning Assistant Program Overview, 2010). Maine Learning Assistants (MLAs) are students who previously succeeded in a course and show an interest in teaching, and are hired to act as tutors and mentors for current students in the same course (Batz, 2014). MLAs provide weekly tutoring outside of class for one hour, and also meet with the professor on a weekly basis and attend the normal class with the struggling students.

During the weekly tutoring intervention, homework assignments were reviewed. For this particular study, 96 students were identified as struggling. Of those 96, only 46 participated in the tutoring. Attendance during the weekly tutoring sessions proved that committed students produced great results. Table 1 shows the MLA session attendance for Fall 2012.

Table 1

MLA Session Attendance, Fall 2012

| | Sessions Attended | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Sessions Attended | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| Number | 11 | 7 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 2 |
| Cumulative % | 23.9 | 39.1 | 45.7 | 56.5 | 65.2 | 73.9 | 80.4 | 84.8 | 95.7 | 100.0 |

Student Motivation

Intrinsic motivation factors include the satisfaction of completing a personal challenge or undertaking and learning something new (Covington, 2007). Hegarty (2010) concluded that motivation plays a crucial role in the performance of students, based on the work of Vallerand (1992). The Academic Motivation Scale (AMS) was developed by Vallerand (1992). The AMS identifies academic motivation in three levels: intrinsic, extrinsic, and motivation.

Rowe (2010) sought to evaluate the potential influence of a “mastery learning” environment—an environment which over 90% of students understand what is taught—on changes in students’ intrinsic motivation to learn. Students who complete courses in which they are enrolled possess greater intrinsic motivation characteristics than students who drop out. Rowe’s research (2010) found there is a relationship between students’ learning environment and the development of intrinsic motivation.

Lee (1991) indicated that teachers often consider “important, interesting, or quality work” as the most important job factor. Job factors relating to professional growth and service were more important than the factors of salary, promotion, and other extrinsic

rewards Smith, 2011). McNickle (2009) researched pride as an intrinsic motivating factor among older workers who were selected to replace the “Baby Boomer” generation as they exited the workplace. The link between increased knowledge and intrinsic motivation has been established (Bourgeois, 2007; Sachau, 1990). Bourgeois examined whether increased metacognition, emotional control, and intrinsic motivation that result from Error Management Training (EMT) influences transfer performance. Bourgeois’ (2007) work was founded on an earlier study by such researchers as Sachau (1990).

Another major factor that is influenced by intrinsic motivation is an achievement. Kelly (2009) sought to determine the relationship between motivation factors and degree of motivation. The results of his analysis identified four factors as the most meaningful to participating students:

1. Students with high intrinsic motivation are more likely to be in the motivated group;
 2. Students were less likely to be in the motivated group as extrinsic reward increased;
 3. Females are more likely to be in the motivated group than males; and
 4. If self-esteem is higher, a student is less likely to be in the motivated group.
- (Smith, 2011).

In her exploration of the career development and achievements of nursing program graduates, Wicker (1995) identified a key theme which emerged from her sample of nursing program graduates: intrinsic motivation seemed to be the integrating and mediating force in the career development and achievements of these studies. This

has shown that intrinsic motivational factors played a major role in the success of the graduates of the nursing program.

Student Preference for Online versus Traditional Delivery Methods

Irons, Keel, and Bielema (2002) found that providing students with a choice of communication tools greatly increases student satisfaction (see also Lin & Overbaugh, 2007). When students have alternatives, student characteristics such as learning styles and life characteristics tend to influence the decision as to whether and how to use computer technology to assist in the learning process (Wilson & Weiser, 2001). Kendall (2001) converted courses taught through traditional means into units using WebCT software as the primary means of delivery. By reporting overall satisfaction of online students with the WebCT software and the organization and content of the units, Kendall argued that it is possible for online courses to achieve the same learning goals and course satisfaction.

Clayton, Blumberg, and Auld (2010) conducted a study on the influences of hybrid, online, and traditional education as it relates to student satisfaction. The researchers found that students who preferred traditional environments showed a mastery of goal orientation and a greater willingness to apply effort while learning; students who preferred less traditional environments presented themselves as more confident because they could manage a non-traditional class (Davis, 2014). Students tend to be more satisfied in the traditional environment because it gives them a chance to interact in a face-to-face classroom with their instructor and other students (Clayton et al., 2010).

Comparing web-based and traditional courses in terms of student satisfaction, Pucel and Stertz (2005) stated that “no statistically significant differences were found between the two versions of each of the courses on the student satisfaction measures” (p.20). Settle and Settle (2005) aimed to determine graduate student satisfaction with online discrete mathematics course and indicated that students’ distance-learning satisfaction with the online course did not differ in a statistically significant way from the satisfaction of the regular section students.

In contrast, Pollock and Wilson (2002) reported on a comparison between traditional face-to-face courses and a reduced seat time (RST) section in which the course met both face-to-face and online. The results showed that there was a higher level of satisfaction with the students who participated in the RST, than face-to-face students. Lim, Kim, Chen, and Ryder (2008) compared three different learning environments (online, traditional, and hybrid) to find out how well students are satisfied with learning in these environments. Their results showed that:

Students in the online and hybrid learning group had statistically significant higher levels of achievement than students in the traditional learning group.

Students in the hybrid learning group had greater satisfaction levels with their overall learning experience than students in the traditional learning group.

However, no significant differences were found between the online learning and traditional learning groups. (p. 1)

Although students in the web-based course consistently scored an average of five percentage points higher on the final exam than did those in the lecture course, they consistently reported less satisfaction than those in the lecture course (Rivera & Rice,

2002). Although neither group ranked their experience as satisfactory, the average level of satisfaction with the online course is somewhat deficient compared with that of the traditional course (Herbert, 2006). Carr (2000) surmised that one of the reasons for less satisfaction could be that there is more time required to complete online assignments. Vamosi, Pierce, and Slotkin (2004) found that student satisfaction in an accounting course was significantly lower than expected primarily because of their lower satisfaction with the distance learning delivery mode.

Student Access/Use of Georgia Virtual Schools

Svitkovich and Knox-Pipes (2009) stated that the Michigan Board of Education, through its Superintendent of Instruction, challenged school districts in 2007 to creatively program for student success. “In an effort to expand opportunities for Michigan high school students, Superintendent Flanagan has invited schools and school districts to seek waivers from the Administrative Rules and Pupil Accounting Rules that *cause barriers to innovation and student academic success*” (p. 4). Here, the superintendent is not focusing on the requirements for seat time. Concepts of seat time waivers, highlighted in the requirements for NCLB, were emerged. Students enrolled in seat time waiver programming were able to utilize online learning and that class would count towards their credit requirements (Deschaine, 2013). Funding could still be provided to school systems although students were not physically present during instruction.

Student Attendance

“One crucial element of a child’s success in school is school attendance” (Atkinson, 1998, p. 12). When student nonattendance increases, research has shown a

corresponding decrease in student achievement (Herberling & Shaffer, 1995). Using a causal-comparative quantitative method Smith (1998) conducted a study to determine the effects of the attendance policy and its effects on high school attendance and the effectiveness of Saturday Redemptive School (SRS) after a one-year implementation of the attendance program in Newport News Public Schools.

At the time of this study, the student population of Newport News Public Schools was 32,000. Smith's study consisted of 4,236 high school students in grades 9, 10, and 11. A stratified random sample (SRS) was chosen to participate in a survey that described their perceptions of the school division's attendance policy and attendance program (Smith, 1998). The total SRS population was used as the sample to determine if the participants' pass rate was affected by attendance (Smith, 1998). Attendance data were arranged from the school year 1996 and the school year 1997 and categorized by high school (Smith, 1998).

Surveys developed by Woog (1992) for students, parents, and administrators were revised to meet the needs of this study by Smith. The revised version of the survey was altered to provide data from teachers who described their perceptions of the attendance policy and the Saturday Redemptive School program in the Newport News School (Jones, 2006). There was a 16-question student survey. The Likert scale was used to answer the survey, ranging from strongly agrees to strongly disagree. The parent survey and teacher survey were the same as the student survey except on the student survey, the students were asked to identify male or female by selecting the approximate box (Smith, 1998).

Findings from this study revealed that the attendance of high school students is not affected by grade level and gender. The data revealed that students in grades 9, 10, and 11 had better attendance in the previous year; however, there was a significant difference in the attendance between grades 9 and 11 (Smith, 1998).

Summary

This chapter reviewed the literature on credit recovery and selected variables that support student achievement as they relate to supporting students who participate in a specific credit recovery program. The literature stated that when parents are involved in their students' academics, it promotes intellectual growth. The literature also suggested that by creating a supportive environment for students who have fallen behind in credits and are participating in a credit recovery program, is highly recommended. When stakeholders become involved and engaged with the program, they promote the purpose and goals of the online program and more success has been evident (Brown, 2011). When administrators determine the priorities and constraints of a program, there is minimized restraint during the change process (Kemp, 2000). It is critical that academic leaders develop a plan to ensure participation with a specific program (Care & Scanlan, 2001). If strategic planning is led by the administrator, the change process is more likely to be successful (Hatche, 2000). Rockwell, Furgason, and Max (2000) reported that when there is a lack of faculty leadership other educational participants are less likely to be supportive of online programs. Olson and Hale (2007) explained that several factors determine the success of online education including students, teachers, technical staff, as well as administrators and their level of participation.

Parents, administrators, and teachers play an important role when helping to get students who have gotten off-track for graduation back on track by recouping credits using credit recovery. The purpose of this study was to identify how effective these variables are on the effectiveness of a specific credit recovery program at one local high school. This study provides a better understanding of the relationships between the graduation rate and the selected variables and how they can support other high schools within this school district with establishing a program that best supports the students the second time around.

CHAPTER III

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework focused on the independent variables which include parental support, administrative advisement support, peer support, and the influence they may have on the dependent variable—the effectiveness of a specific credit recovery program. The assumption was that the implementation of the independent variables would assist local schools in the area of graduating students. The Social Cognitive Theory was used to support the assumptions of this study.

Zone of Proximal Development

When a teacher is knowledgeable about their student's ability levels, they then have the opportunity to adjust instruction; as needed. Modifications can be made to lessons, to support each student's literacy learning. Many researchers and reflective practitioners feel that the strategies that will best accomplish enhanced learning are those that support learning within the child's zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1933, 1978). There are only a few programs that are available that observe the student and develop strategies, and methods to work to improve student competency levels. From a constructivist perspective, new learning does not occur at the actual level of development, but rather it occurs in the zone of proximal development—"the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by individual problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in

collaboration with more capable peers” (Vygotsky, 1933, 1978, p. 86). Individuals, be they an adult, a more knowledgeable peer, or a parent, work within this zone to support a child until she/he is able to internalize and demonstrate independent ability or ownership of new learning (Burch, 2007). The term used to describe this support is “scaffolding,” which has been defined as a support system that helps children achieve success on tasks that would be too difficult for them to achieve by themselves (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976). The position statement in the International Reading Association’s (IRA’s) brochure, “Using Multiple Methods of Beginning Reading Instruction” (International Reading Association, 1999), supports teachers’ accommodating the diverse needs of their students by choosing and implementing a wide variety of instructional materials and instructional methods in classroom literacy instruction. The IRA position statement asserts the following:

There is no single method or single combination of methods that can successfully teach all children to read. Therefore, teachers must have strong knowledge of multiple methods for teaching reading and strong knowledge of the children in their care so they can create the appropriate balance of methods needed for the children they teach. (p. 1)

Research has shown that it is helpful for all children within all classrooms to build upon the strengths and prior knowledge of young children to extend their literacy learning (Allington, 2001; Fountas & Pinnell, 1996; Hall & Cunningham, 1994). Use of instructional methods that include all learning modes (visual, auditory, tactile, and kinesthetic) allows teachers to address the needs of all students at all performance levels (Allington, 2001; Dorn, 1998; Fountas & Pinnell, 1996; Lyons, 2003; Stewart, 2002).

The basic theme of Vygotsky's (1934) work in cognitive development is his idea that the child's thinking develops through social interaction mediated by language (Dixon-Krauss, 1996). It is through the use of language that a child is able to reach their level of understanding; as it relates to their environment. Cognitive understanding is built upon through language and conversation. Language becomes a powerful tool for scaffolding (Burch, 2007).

Scaffolding

The term scaffolding was first introduced and used in education by psychologist Jerome Bruner (Bruner 1883a, 1983b, 1986; Nino & Bruner 1978; Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976) to describe the type of interaction that occurs within the Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1933, 1977; see also, Leong, Bodrova, Hensen, & Henninger, 1999). Through scaffolding, temporary support is provided to the learning. Various authors (e.g., Cooper, 1997; Dorn, 2003) have viewed scaffolding as analogous to learning new motor skills, such as bike riding. Learning to ride a bike begins with a helper standing beside the person on the bike. The helper then helps push the student, helping them balance and gain confidence. While the helper is assisting, the person on the bike is pedaling and attempting to balance themselves. This type of support is scaffolding. This support is needed as the child is learning to ride the bike but as the child is able to maintain his balance, the scaffolding is taken away (Au, Mason, & Scheu, 1995). Copper (1997) stated that the learner knows what riding a bike looks like; but as he makes his first attempts or approximations, they are not perfect or exact.

As children test these ideas, their mistakes are very important and essential to learning (Cambourne, 1988). In more formal settings, learning follows a similar pattern – learners go through various approximations as they strive to develop their knowledge of new concepts (Cooper, 1997). Within education, when scaffolding takes place, it looks like collaborative effort and accomplishment. Working together, and being successful, starts the process of being able to work independently and be successful. When adults “scaffold” students’ learning by helping them do what they cannot yet do alone (Bruner, 1975, as cited in Ninio & Bruner, 1978), we are modeling the process involved and enabling the learners to become a little more competent each time to eventually carry out the process themselves.

Social Cognitive Theory

Self-regulation in learning generally is influenced by the accomplishment of goals. Self-regulation refers to the process whereby students activate and sustain behaviors, cognitions, and affects that are systematically oriented toward the attainment of learning goals (Zimmerman, 1989, 1990, 1994). When engaging in an activity, one will generally be more motivated to be engaged if they can see the added value. Figure 4 shows the prototypical self-regulation model where motivation is included in terms of outcomes only. An example of this would be: a student will study if they know it will help get them a good grade on an assignment/test. The degree of motivation will vary as a consequence of how much we value that outcome and of our expectations of attaining it (Eccles, 1983).

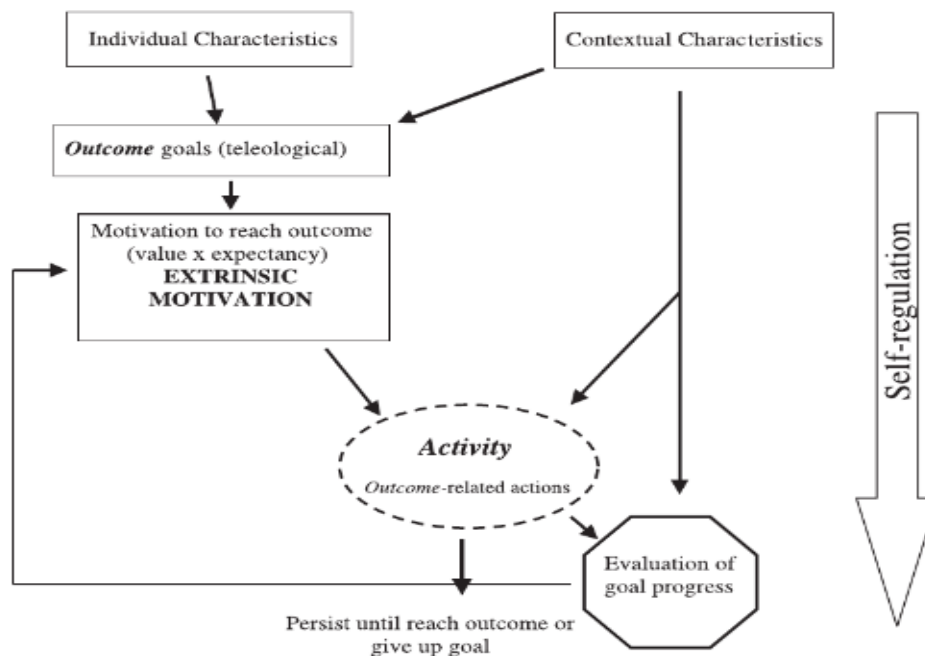


Figure 4. Prototypical self-regulation model.

The emphasis in most self-regulation models has been on what researchers have labeled “extrinsic motivation” (i.e., motivation to engage in an activity because it is a means to an end) and on the metacognitive variables that contribute to this goal-striving process, such as goal setting, construction of and choice of strategies to reach goals, standards used to evaluate progress, and so on (Sansone & Thomas, 2003). More recently, however, researchers have begun to investigate the role of emotional and affective variables in the self-regulation process (e.g., Boekaerts, in press; Pekrun, Goetz, Tinz, & Perry, 2002). In particular, there is a growing recognition that in addition to monitoring progress toward goals, an important part of the self-regulation process involves monitoring how we feel (Efklides & Petkaki, in press; Krapp, in press).

People are intrinsically motivated when their behavior is motivated by the anticipated, actual, or sought experience of “interest” (Sansone & Thomas, 2005). According to the Self-Determination Theory [SDT] (Ryan & Deci, 2000), when we are pursuing our own goals, we are inherently self-regulated. There is a strong possibility that students who score poorly on self-regulated assessments will still be successful in producing self-regulated work when they are approaching their own goals.

The Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1987) proposes that we are motivated to engage in activities to the extent that they are associated with the satisfaction of psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Although satisfaction of these needs can be a precursor to the experience of interest, Deci (1998) noted the following:

... [W]e do not believe that intrinsically motivated behavior is necessarily *aimed* at the satisfaction of the intrinsic needs. Rather, we suggest that people will be more inclined to engage in interesting activities... in situations where their intrinsic needs can be satisfied. (p. 152)

Distinguishing the interest experience from positive affect or mood is important. Interest must be experienced in the context of a particular activity (Krapp, 2000), although the “activity” can change over time, individuals, and situations. Furthermore, although positive effect is typically associated with the experience of interest (Ainley, Hidi, & Berndoff, 2002), there can still be moments of negative feelings during the interested engagement. This is true when people get frustrated when trying to find a solution to a problem.

We suggest that the experience of interest can become the most proximal motivator for persistence and subsequent engagement, particularly for activities that take place over the long term (Harackiewicz, Barron, & Elliot, 1998). Figure 5 offers a goal-based model of self-regulation that includes, in bold face, the typically missing role of the interest experience (Sansone & Thoman, 2005). We think of interest as a necessary component of the self-regulatory process that may work with or against extrinsic factors to affect motivation (Sansone & Harackiewicz, 1996).

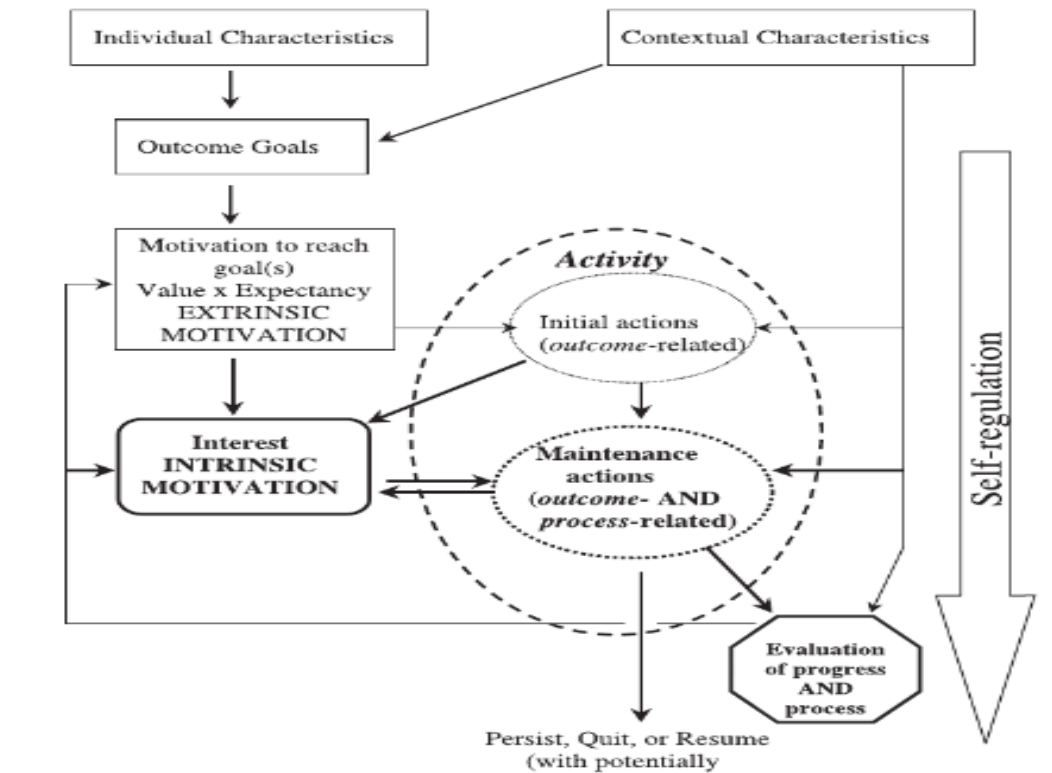


Figure 5. Self-regulation of motivation model. (Boldface is used to highlight the additions to the prototypical self-regulation model when the role of the interest experience is included.)

Definition of Terms

Cohort is the grouping of students, once they enter high school their freshman year. Cohort represents the start date of their high school career. Ideally, students will work alongside their cohort to achieve their high school diploma at the same time.

Cohort Analyzer is a district designed an instrument that provides each school (high-school level) with up-to-date data. Schools have the task of graduating students within each cohort, within four years of their entry date into high school; this is how the graduation rate is calculated. The Cohort Analyzer shows the school in real time which student is off-track to graduate with their 4-year cohort.

Credit Recovery is an online program designed to help middle and high school students complete courses that they were not successful in the first time, by receiving a passing grade of 70% or higher.

Georgia Virtual School provides a teacher led, virtual classroom environment. Georgia Virtual School also equips students with an online media center and guidance center to support students throughout their online course experience (<http://gavirtualschool.org/About/GeneralFAQs.aspx>).

Graduation Rate is the rate in which high school students' graduate from high school within four years of entering high school.

No Child Left Behind establishes a rigorous standard for the nation's public schools and a strict model to assess student, school, and district achievement (in No Child Left Behind & Adequate Yearly Progress, p. ii).

Parental Involvement ranges from helping with homework and reading with and to the child at home, to activities such as attending parent-teacher conferences, open

house, back-to-school nights, and other school and home activities that promote intellectual growth such as taking their children to the library and to museums (Stevenson & Baker, 1987).

Ram Time is the title of the advisement class held at the research site. The mascot at the research site is a “Ram,” hence Ram Time. Ram Time is also the 7th period on the daily bell schedule.

Definition of Variables

Dependent Variables

Credit Recovery Effectiveness, in this study, refers to the number of students who successfully completed all credit recovery courses in which they were registered in prior to the program end date.

Independent Variables

Administrative Advisement Support, “Administrative Advisement Support” in this study, refers to the overall support that students who are participating in credit recovery, receive from the school and the administrator. This includes face to face advisement/encouragement as well as proctoring during final assessments.

Parental Support, in this study, refers to the support that the student receives from their parents/guardian. This type of support includes how involved the parent is with their child’s academic and home life.

Student Access/Use of Georgia Virtual School, in this study, refers to the student following daily schedule and reporting to their Credit recovery class. It also refers to students who choose not to use Credit recovery as a means of recouping missed

credits, needed to graduate on-time. Students have to provide documentation showing that they have taken and received credit for missed credits, prior to being taken off the off-track list.

Student Motivation, in this study refers to the self-motivation a student possesses with wanting to complete Credit recovery modules, in order to graduate on-time.

Student Preference for Online vs Traditional Delivery Methods, in this study refers to a delivery method in which the student prefers to receive instruction (online or traditional).

Teacher Support, in this study, refers to the benefit of having a certified teacher present to provide direct instruction for students who need additional guidance when completing credit recovery modules; on a daily basis.

Figure 6 illustrates the variables used in this study.

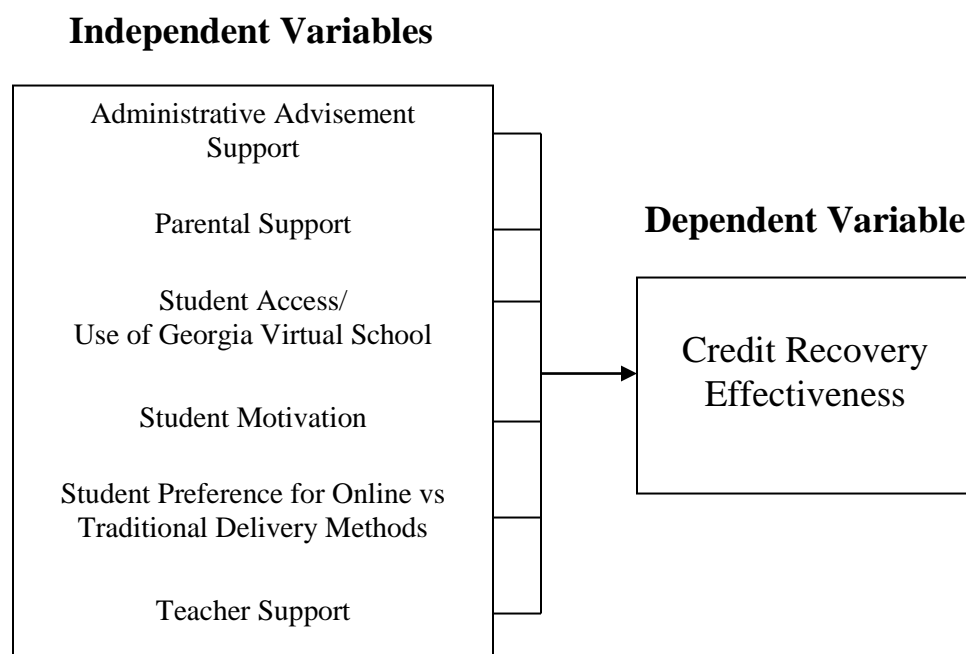


Figure 6. Independent and dependent variables.

Research Questions

- RQ1: Is there a difference in the graduation rate of a selected high school based on the implementation of a credit recovery program and the graduation rate prior to the implementation of the program?
- RQ2: Is there a significant relationship between parental support and the academic achievement of students in a credit recovery program at a selected high school?
- RQ3: Is there a significant relationship between administrative support and student achievement at a specific high school?
- RQ4: Is there a significant relationship between teacher support and student achievement at a specific high school?
- RQ5: Does student motivation affect the success rates for credit recovery?
- RQ6: Is there a significant relationship between student preference for online vs traditional delivery methods, and student achievement?
- RQ7: How much do parents know about the credit recovery program at their child's school?

Justification of the Variables

This study suggests that parental, administrative, and teacher support are major contributors to the success of a credit recovery program. These factors work towards getting students to complete online modules, which result in the student receiving credit for courses that they have failed. Parents are impactful when they are in-tune to the

academia of the student. School leaders working to create an environment where students are able to recoup credits during the school day help to show the student that the school is student-focused. Providing this opportunity for free of charge provides a financial break-through for the parents. Providing each participant with a certified teacher provides the student with a positive learning environment. It was the goal of the researcher that this study would support the idea that a properly facilitated credit recovery program can impact the academic success of the participants.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design consisted of a survey of the students who participated in the credit recovery program, as well as an interview of multiple parents whose students were participants, and a document review. This mixed-method approach provided a case study to explain how the effects of select variables impact the success of credit recovery and the graduation rate at one specific school. When students failed one or more courses (between the 60-69 percentile), they were enrolled in a credit recovery course. The survey instrument used in this study is included (see Appendix A).

Description of the Setting

This study was conducted at a high school within a large metropolitan school district within the Southeastern United States. The high school in which the research was conducted was established in 2000. Currently, there are 2852 students enrolled. The student population consists of several ethnic groups: African American, Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Multiracial, and Caucasian. Table 2 provides the ethnic distribution of students at the research site. The mission of the research site is “First Comes Learning.” Striving to equip students for future success by providing a secure learning environment where students feel physically and emotionally safe, academically challenged, and empowered to enter the global community with confident preparedness was the vision of the research site.

Table 2

Ethnic Distribution of Students in Selected Schools

| School Year | Enrollment | African | Asian/ | Hispanic | American Indian/ | Multiracial | Caucasian |
|-------------|------------|----------|------------------|----------|------------------|-------------|-----------|
| | | American | Pacific Islander | | Alaskan Native | | |
| 2013 – 2014 | 2,632 | 41% | 5% | 10% | 1% | 4% | 40% |
| 2014 – 2015 | 2,767 | 1,214 | 169 | 336 | 12 | 111 | 1,010 |
| 2015 – 2016 | 2,829 | 1,209 | 171 | 337 | 12 | 110 | 993 |

Description of Population and Sample

The 2012 cohort consisted of 121 students who were off track for graduation. Students were identified as off-track for graduation for three specific reasons: local district assessment scores, not enough credit, or the student had been retained. This research was conducted with the specifics of addressing students not having enough credits. The sample included 77 students out of the 121 who were off-track because they failed one or more courses and were eligible to participate in credit recovery due to the range in which they failed the courses. Data were collected from the 2014-2015 (2011 cohort) as preliminary data. Five parents of students who participated in the credit recovery program were also a part of this study. Data from the 2015-2016 school year (2012 cohort) were collected and analyzed for this study. There were 10 credit recovery classes that consisted of 11th and 12th grade (repeaters). For each credit recovery class in which the students were enrolled, students had 6-weeks to complete the course free of charge. If courses were not completed within this timeframe, there was a \$25 re-enrollment fee.

Description of Instrumentation

The instrument used to measure student achievement was the Cohort Analyzer. The Cohort Analyzer is a district designed instrument that provides each school (high-school level) with up-to-date data. Schools have the task of graduating students within each cohort, within four years of their entry date into high school; this is how the graduation rate is calculated. The Cohort Analyzer showed the school which student was off-track to graduate with their 4-year cohort. Students were identified if they did not have enough credits or were failing the local district assessment. The Cohort Analyzer also provided the school with their graduation rate at the specific time. The Cohort Analyzer showed an increase in the graduation rate as students completed courses. The overall success of the program was determined by the number of credits that were recouped prior to the program completion date. There was a direct relationship between the variables and the analyzer. A survey instrument developed by the researcher, measured the dimensions of the theoretical framework. A parent interview, which included five parents, took place to determine if there were any difficulties that were experienced with their child related to credit recovery.

The survey instrument, developed by the researcher, included 28 questions. The questions measured the student perception of the extent of credit recovery effectiveness, parental support, administrative support, teacher support, student motivation, student preference for online vs traditional delivery methods, and student access/use of Georgia Virtual Schools. Table 3 shows the alignment of the variables, research questions, and survey questions/parent interview.

Table 3

Alignment of Variables: Survey, Parent Interview Questions, and Document Review

| Research Questions | Survey Questions | Parent Interview Questions | Document Review |
|--|------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|
| RQ1: Is there a difference in the graduation rate of a selected high school based on the implementation of a credit recovery program and the graduation rate prior to the implementation of the program? | 1-4 | | 1-4 |
| RQ2: Is there a significant relationship between parental support and the academic achievement of students in a credit recovery program at a selected high school? | 5-10 | | 5-10 |
| RQ3: Is there a significant relationship between administrative support and student achievement at a specific high school? | 11-15 | | 11-15 |
| RQ4: Is there a significant relationship between teacher support and student achievement at a specific high school? | 16-20 | | 16-20 |
| RQ5: Does student motivation affect the success rates for Credit recovery? | 21-23 | | 21-23 |
| RQ6: Is there a significant relationship between student preference for online vs traditional delivery methods, and student achievement? | 24-25 | | 24-25 |
| RQ7: How much do parents know about the Credit recovery program at their child's school? | | 1-10 | |

Construct Validity

The item-to-scale correlation analysis was used to test the survey instrument for construct validity. Parental Support and survey questions 5-10 measured the variable and found that there was a correlation of 5 (.806), 6 (.771), 7 (.682), 8 (.746), 9 (.770), and 10 (.256) and in each case except for item 10, there was a significance of .000. Item 10 had a significance of .070. Therefore, there was a significant relationship between each item and parental support as shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Parental Support Validity

| | | Parent Support | Item #5 | Item #6 | Item # 7 | Item # 8 | Item #9 | Item #10 |
|---------------|---------------------|-------------------|------------|------------|-------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| ParentSupport | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .806(**) | .771(**) | .682(**) | .746(**) | .770(**) | .256 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .070 |
| | N | 51 | 51 | 51 | 51 | 51 | 51 | 51 |

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The item-to-scale correlation analysis was used to test the survey instrument for construct validity. Administrative Support and survey questions 11-15 measured the variable and found that there was a correlation of 11 (.836), 12 (.908), 13 (.836), 14 (.781), and 15 (.749); there was a significance of .000 in each case. Therefore, there was a significant relationship between each item and administrative support as shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Administrative Support Validity

| | | AdminSupport | Item #11 | Item #12 | Item #13 | Item #14 | Item #15 |
|--------------|---------------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| AdminSupport | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .836(**) | .908(**) | .836(**) | .781(**) | .749(**) |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| | N | 51 | 51 | 51 | 51 | 51 | 51 |

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The item-to-scale correlation analysis was used to test the survey instrument for construct validity. Teacher Support and survey questions 16-20 measured the variable and found that there was a correlation of 16 (.790), 17 (.776), 18 (.954), 19 (.902), and 20 (.849); in each case, there was a significance of .000. Therefore, there was a significant relationship between each item and teacher support as shown in Table 6.

Table 6

Teacher Support Validity

| | | TeachSupp | Item #16 | Item #17 | Item #18 | Item #19 | Item #20 |
|-----------|---------------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| TeachSupp | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .790(**) | .776(**) | .954(**) | .902(**) | .849(**) |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| | N | 51 | 51 | 51 | 51 | 51 | 51 |

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The item-to-scale correlation analysis was used to test the survey instrument for construct validity. Student Motivation and survey questions 21-22 measured the variable and found that there was a correlation of 21 (.580), and 22 (.792); in each case, there was

a significance of .000. Therefore, there was a significant relationship between each item and student motivation as shown in Table 7.

Table 7

Student Motivation Validity

| | | StudMot | Item #21 | Item #22 |
|---------|---------------------|---------|-------------|-------------|
| StudMot | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .790(**) | .776(**) |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 | .000 |
| | N | 51 | 51 | 51 |

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Reliability Tests

The Cronbach Alpha test was also used to test the reliability of the survey instrument. Table 8 shows that each variable was found to be reliable given that the Cronbach Alpha coefficient in each case was above the generally acceptable level of .700.

Table 8

Reliability Statistics

| Independent Variables | Cronbach's Alpha | Number of Items |
|------------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Parental Support | .754 | 7 |
| Administrative Support | .811 | 6 |
| Teacher Support | .818 | 6 |
| Student Motivation | .746 | 3 |

Limitations of the Study

1. Since this study took place at only one site, the generalizations were limited.
2. The researcher worked at the research site. However, the researcher was not the direct supervisor of the program. This required the researcher to have to seek additional guidance as to how the credit recovery program operated on a day to day basis.
3. Another limitation that the researcher faced was during the survey process, students may not have responded to the survey in the same manner as the parent/guardian.

Data Collection

The following steps outline the procedures for collecting data for this study and the school:

1. Weekly report-outs from a direct supervisor of the credit recovery program were conducted to inform the administrative team of the success of the program.
2. Weekly document reviews of Cohort Analyzer were done.
3. Approval from the Institutional Review Board at Clark Atlanta University was obtained.
4. Approval to collect data was obtained by the local school district.
5. A survey instrument measuring the effectiveness regarding parental support, administrative advisement support, and peer support was completed by the students and parents.

The researcher secured permission to conduct research from the school district and the university. Once permission was granted, the researcher sent a permission slip to the parents of the students that participated in the study. The researcher sought parental permission to administer a survey to the student participants of credit recovery. Parents were asked to respond via email if they would like to have their child to opt out of the survey. The researcher then administered the Credit Recovery Survey to each student, individually. The researcher met with each participant during a final Administrative Advisement meeting. At that time, the survey was administered. The researcher then randomly selected five parents and interviewed them using the Parent Interview Questions.

The sample selected for this study included the 2012 cohort of students at a high school within a large metropolitan school district within the Southeastern United States. The survey was conducted at the research site. The researcher provided each credit recovery teacher with the surveys to distribute to the students.

During the first year of implementing the credit recovery program at the research site, participating students were provided individualized computer-aided instruction in science, social studies, mathematics, and language arts. Students were provided the opportunity to complete modules in the media center during their lunch/advisement period. Peer tutors were present to provide academic support/tutoring. Administrative support was provided on a daily basis. Schools were given the autonomy as to how they wanted to implement their credit recovery across the district.

Following the best practices for successfully facilitating a credit recovery program through Georgia Virtual Schools, adjustments were made for the 2015-2016 school year.

These best practices suggested that participating students had to have 10 hours of seat time where direct instruction was provided by a certified teacher. Administrative support was still provided on a daily basis. Requirements of having all final assessments proctored were guaranteed; following these best practices. The research distributed surveys to each participant.

CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The purpose of the study was to determine how effective a specific credit recovery program was at improving the graduation rate at a high school within a large metropolitan school district within the Southeastern United States. The independent variables for the study included parental support, administrative advisement support, teacher support, student motivation, student preference for online versus traditional delivery method, and student access. The dependent variable was credit recovery effectiveness.

Data were collected three ways: (a) student survey, (b) parent interview, and (c) weekly review of a district designed reporting tool. Student surveys were administered at the research site, by the credit recovery teachers to assess their perception regarding parental support, administrative advisement support, teacher support, student motivation, student preference for online versus traditional delivery method, and student access and how these variables affected student achievement.

Surveys were administered to 51 of the 121 students who were identified as being off-track for graduation, through paper and pencil model. Five parents of students who participated in the Credit Recovery Program at this local school were also interviewed.

The purpose of the study was to determine how effective a specific credit recovery program was, at improving the graduation rate at a high school within a large

metropolitan school district within the South East United States. Qualitative and quantitative approaches were taken by the researcher to provide depth and understanding to this study. Data from this study were collected via the administering of a student survey, parent interview, and through weekly review of a district designed reporting tool. Student surveys and parent interviews were analyzed to identify the relationships that existed between variables, student achievement, and graduation rate.

Overview of Data Collection and Analysis

According to the correlation analysis, the data were used to determine the relationship between the success of a specific credit recovery program and the independent variables. The success of this particular credit recovery program was measured by the number of credits that were recouped under the guidance of this program. The data analysis of this study used the value of 0.05 to measure the level of significance. Data were presented to answer the research questions identified in Chapter IV. The findings from this study are presented in tabular format and are analyzed in the narratives that follow. Table 9 provides the data of correlation coefficients, needed to answer the research questions.

Table 9

Correlation of Effectiveness of Credit Recovery and Independent Variables

| | | Administrative | | |
|--|--------|----------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| | Item 2 | Parent Support | Advisement Support | Teacher Support |
| Item 2 | | | | |
| Pearson Correlation | 1 | .090 | .049 | .072 |
| Sig. (2 tailed) | | .530 | .730 | .617 |
| N | 51 | 51 | 51 | 51 |
| Parent Support | | | | |
| Pearson Correlation | .090 | 1 | .404** | .441** |
| Sig. (2 tailed) | .530 | | .003 | .001 |
| N | 51 | 51 | 51 | 51 |
| Administrative Advisement Support | | | | |
| Pearson Correlation | .049 | .404** | 1 | .621** |
| Sig. (2 tailed) | .730 | .003 | | .000 |
| N | 51 | 51 | 51 | 51 |
| Teacher Support | | | | |
| Pearson Correlation | .072 | .441** | .621** | 1 |
| Sig. (2 tailed) | .617 | .001 | .000 | |
| N | 51 | 51 | 51 | 51 |
| Student Motivation | | | | |
| Pearson Correlation | .140 | .416** | .222 | .179 |
| Sig. (2 tailed) | .328 | .002 | .117 | .208 |
| N | 51 | 51 | 51 | 51 |
| Student Preference for Online vs Traditional | | | | |
| Delivery Method | | | | |
| Pearson Correlation | .245 | .323* | .078 | .335* |
| Sig. (2 tailed) | .084 | .021 | .587 | .016 |
| N | 51 | 51 | 51 | 51 |

Table 9 (continued)

| | | Administrative | | |
|--|--------------------|--|--|-----------------|
| | Item 2 | Parent Support | Advisement Support | Teacher Support |
| Student Access and Use of Georgia Virtual School | | | | |
| Pearson Correlation | -.029 | .385** | .740** | .631** |
| Sig. (2 tailed) | .838 | .005 | .000 | .000 |
| N | 51 | 51 | 51 | 51 |
| | | | | |
| | Student Motivation | Student Preference for Online vs Traditional Delivery Method | Student Access and Use of Georgia Virtual School | |
| Item 2 | | | | |
| Pearson Correlation | .140 | .245 | -.029 | |
| Sig. (2 tailed) | .328 | .084 | .838 | |
| N | 51 | 51 | 51 | |
| Parent Support | | | | |
| Pearson Correlation | .416** | .323* | .385** | |
| Sig. (2 tailed) | .002 | .021 | .005 | |
| N | 51 | 51 | 51 | |
| Administrative Advisement Support | | | | |
| Pearson Correlation | .222 | .078 | .740** | |
| Sig. (2 tailed) | .117 | .58 | .000 | |
| N | 51 | 51 | 51 | |
| Teacher Support | | | | |
| Pearson Correlation | .179 | .335* | .631** | |
| Sig. (2 tailed) | .208 | .016 | .000 | |
| N | 51 | 51 | 51 | |

Table 9 (continued)

| | Student Motivation | Student Preference for Online vs Traditional Delivery Method | Student Access and Use of Georgia Virtual School |
|---|-----------------------|--|--|
| Student Motivation | | | |
| Pearson Correlation | 1 | -.092 | .322* |
| Sig. (2 tailed) | | .522 | .021 |
| N | 51 | 51 | 51 |
| Student Preference for Online vs Traditional Delivery Method | | | |
| Pearson Correlation | -.092 | 1 | .237 |
| Sig. (2 tailed) | .522 | | .094 |
| N | 51 | 51 | 51 |
| Student Access and Use of Georgia Virtual School | | | |
| Pearson Correlation | .322* | .237 | 1 |
| Sig. (2 tailed) | .021 | .094 | |
| N | 51 | 51 | 51 |

RQ1: Is there a difference in the graduation rate of a selected high school based on the implementation of a credit recovery program and the graduation rate prior to the implementation of the program?

In the years prior to the change in administration and prior to the implementation of this specific credit recovery program, the graduation rates at the research site were:

- 2013-2014 School Year: 83.6% Graduation Rate
- 2012-2013 School Year: 73.3% Graduation Rate

- 2011-2012 School Year: 81.8% Graduation Rate
- 2010-2011 School Year: 80.4% Graduation Rate

Once credit recovery was implemented through the use of Georgia Virtual Schools, the graduation rate increased from 88% in 2014-2015 to 91% in 2015-2016.

RQ2: Is there a significant relationship between parental support and the academic achievement of students in a credit recovery program at a selected high school?

The Pearson r Correlation Coefficient was used to determine the significance of the relationship between parental support and the academic achievement of students in a credit recovery program at a selected high school. The correlation coefficient is .090, with a level of significance of .530. Therefore, there is no significant relationship.

RQ3: Is there a significant relationship between administrative support and student achievement at a specific high school?

The Pearson r Correlation Coefficient was used to determine the relationship between administrative support and student achievement. The correlation coefficient is .049, with a level of significance of .730. Therefore, there is no significant relationship.

RQ4: Is there a significant relationship between teacher support and student achievement at a specific high school?

The Pearson r Correlation Coefficient was used to determine the relationship between teacher support and student achievement. The correlation coefficient is .072, with a level of significance of .617. Therefore, there is no significant relationship.

RQ5: Does student motivation affect the success rates for credit recovery?

The Pearson r Correlation Coefficient was used to determine the relationship between student motivation and the Credit recovery success rate. The correlation coefficient is .140, with a level of significance of .328. Therefore, there is no significant relationship.

RQ6: Is there a significant relationship between student preference for online vs traditional delivery methods, and student achievement?

Results from the student survey, particularly number 24, were used to determine the relationship between student preference and student achievement. On the basis of question number 24, most students prefer online delivery methods. Therefore, there is a relationship between student achievement and online delivery methods. Frequency Table 10 supports these findings.

Table 10

Response to Question on Program Delivery Method (#24)

Student Survey #24: The online modules were easy to complete

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|---------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Valid | Strongly Disagree | 1 | 2.0 | 2.0 | 2.0 |
| | Disagree | 3 | 5.9 | 5.9 | 7.8 |
| | Neutral | 16 | 31.4 | 31.4 | 39.2 |
| | Agree | 15 | 29.4 | 29.4 | 68.6 |
| | Strongly Agree | 16 | 31.4 | 31.4 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 51 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

RQ7: How much do parents know about the Credit recovery program at their child's school?

Surveys were administered to five parents of students who participated in Credit recovery. From surveys gathered, it was determined that the parents were very informed about the specifics of the credit recovery program at their child's school. Before any student could be officially enrolled into a class, the student had to return a permission slip that contained a parent's signature. The parents knew that each credit recovery course was free for a first-time course. Any re-enrollment course had a cost of \$25. Parents were also aware that students were encouraged to work on modules at home. There is time built into the school day, where the students can work on modules. Students must take all posttest and final exams at school under the supervision of a proctor—no exceptions. Parents also knew who the point of contact for Credit recovery was at the local level. This information was verified by obtaining parent signatures from parent meetings and receipt of important information that was sent home to the parent.

The study also sought to determine the benefits of an online student learning environment compared to a traditional classroom setting. Based on the results on the student survey for question 25, it was determined that being with friends in the traditional setting did not affect the preference that students had for participating credit recovery programs. Table 11, supports these results.

Table 11

Response to Question on Program Delivery Preference (#25)

| Student Survey #25: I would prefer taking this class in the traditional setting because I would be with my friends. | | | | | |
|---|-------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | Strongly Disagree | 5 | 9.8 | 9.8 | 9.8 |
| | Disagree | 12 | 23.5 | 23.5 | 33.3 |
| | Neutral | 14 | 27.5 | 27.5 | 60.8 |
| | Agree | 13 | 25.5 | 25.5 | 86.3 |
| | Strongly Agree | 7 | 13.7 | 13.7 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 51 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

The literature suggests that student motivation can be a critical factor in student achievement. Student motivation in this study was therefore examined to see which of the variables might have the strongest impact on it.

The data were subjected to a regression analysis to determine the strongest predictors of student motivation. From the regression table (Table 12), it can be seen that student access and use of Georgia Virtual School is the strongest predictor of student motivation with a beta weight of .322 and a level of significance of .021.

Table 12

Predictors of Student Motivation #1

| | Unstandardized | | Standardized | T | Significance |
|--|----------------|------------|--------------|-------|--------------|
| | Coefficient | | Coefficient | | |
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| Student Access and Use of Georgia Virtual School | .194 | .082 | .322 | 2.377 | .021 |

Table 13 shows another strong predictor of student motivation, parent support, with a beta weight of .416 and a level of significance of .002.

Table 13

Predictors of Student Motivation #2

| | Unstandardized Coefficient | | Standardized Coefficient | T | Significance |
|---------------|-------------------------------|------------|-----------------------------|-------|--------------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| ParentSupport | .136 | .042 | .416 | 3.206 | .002 |

From the Adjusted R Square, Table 14, it can be seen that the predictor parent support accounts for 16%.

Table 14

Variation in Student Motivation

| | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|---|-------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | .416* | .173 | .157 | 1.14649 |

The researcher went deeper into the data to determine which variable might influence parental support. Table 15 shows that teacher support, student motivation, and student preference for online vs traditional delivery are the most impacting variables on parent support.

Table 15

Variation in Parent Support

| Model | | Coefficients ^a | | | t | Sig |
|-------|--|---------------------------|------------|--------------|-------|------|
| | | Unstandardized | | Standardized | | |
| | | Coefficients | | Coefficients | | |
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| 1 | (Constant) | 15.937 | 2.495 | | 6.388 | .000 |
| | TeacherSupport | .421 | .122 | .441 | 3.440 | .001 |
| 2 | (Constant) | 8.604 | .3461 | | 2.486 | .016 |
| | TeacherSupport | .361 | .116 | .378 | 3.110 | .003 |
| | StudentMotivation | 1.071 | .374 | .349 | 2.864 | .006 |
| 3 | (Constant) | 4.500 | 3.858 | | 1.166 | .249 |
| | TeacherSupport | .270 | .120 | .283 | 2.245 | .029 |
| | StudentMotivation | 1.198 | .366 | .390 | 3.276 | .002 |
| | StudentPreferenceforOnlinevs TraditionalDeliveryMethods | .711 | .334 | .264 | 2.127 | .039 |

a. Dependent Variable: ParentSupport

Table 16 shows the R Square coefficients that teacher support is the strongest of the influential variables. This variable accounts for 17% of the variance in parental support, student motivation contributes only 11%, and student preference for online vs traditional is the least impacting with only a 5% contribution.

Table 16

R Square Coefficients

| Model | Model Summary | | | |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of The Estimate |
| 1 | .441 ^a | .194 | .178 | 3.47756 |
| 2 | .559 ^b | .312 | .283 | 3.24703 |
| 3 | .610 ^c | .372 | .332 | 3.13404 |

a. Predictors: (Constant), TeacherSupport

b. Predictors: (Constant), TeacherSupport, StudentMotivation

c. Predictors: (Constant), TeacherSupport, StudentMotivation,
StudentPreferenceforOnlinevsTraditionalDeliveryMethods

Summary

A high school from a metropolitan Atlanta school district participated in this research study. Data were collected three ways: (a) student survey, (b) parent interview, and (c) weekly review of a district designed reporting tool.

The analysis of the data revealed the following: (a) students who participated in this specific credit recovery model were able to recoup credits and graduate (on-time) at a rate of 100%, (b) there is no significant relationship between parental support and the academic achievement of students in a credit recovery program at a selected high school, (c) there is no significant relationship between administrative support and student achievement, (d) there is no significant relationship between teacher support and student achievement, (e) there is no significant relationship between student motivation and the credit recovery success rate, and (f) parents are very informed about the specifics of the credit recovery program at their child's school.

CHAPTER VI

FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine how effective a specific credit recovery program was at improving the graduation rate at a high school within a large metropolitan school within the Southeastern United States. A student survey was created, a parent interview was conducted, and a district designed reporting tool was reviewed to gather data on how the graduation rate was affected by parental support, administrative advisement support, teacher support, student motivation, student preference for online versus traditional delivery method, and student access.

Research Methods

Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used in this research study. The quantitative portion of the research involved the collection of data gathered from the student survey and a review of the district's designed reporting tool, and checking for the improvement of the graduation rate as students who participated in the credit recovery program completed courses. The qualitative portion of the research involved the perceptions of the parents on how informed they were about the specific credit recovery program. Both methods focused on the possible relationships that existed between parental support, administrative advisement support, teacher support, student motivation, student preference for online versus traditional delivery method and their effect on the

graduation rate. The correlation, ANOVA, and regression tests were required in testing the research questions. The survey was analyzed using the Cronbach Alpha and was tested for construct validity using item-to-scale correlations. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used by the researcher to answer the research questions.

Findings

Based on the results from the analysis in Chapter V, the following findings were concluded by the researcher related to the research questions that guided the study.

RQ1: Is there a significant difference in the overall graduation rates of a selected high school based on the implementation of a credit recovery program?

To test this research question, a paired t-test was conducted. The analysis of the data revealed that at the research site, students who participated in the specific credit recovery model; were able to recoup credits and graduate (on-time) at a rate of 100%. Therefore, implementing a specific credit recovery program at the research site showed a significant relationship with the improvement of the graduation rate.

RQ6: Is there a significant relationship between student preference for online vs traditional delivery methods, and student achievement?

To test this research question, the results from question #24 on the student survey was analyzed. Most students that participated in the study preferred the online method of delivery. Therefore, the student preference for the online method had more of an effect towards student achievement.

RQ7: How much do parents know about the Credit recovery program at their child's school?

To test this research question, results from the parent survey were analyzed. The analysis of the data from the parent survey revealed that parents were very informed about the operations and expectations of the credit recovery program at their child's school.

The researcher discovered that the correlations did not reveal that there was a significant relationship between the independent variables and dependent variables. Analysis from the parent survey showed that parents were well informed about the policies and procedures that took place within the credit recovery program at their child's school. The regression analysis revealed that student motivation had a strong impact on the determination of the success on student achievement. Student motivation had the strongest impact on student achievement, as it related to the graduation rate.

Significant Findings

At the research location, student motivation and parent support had the greatest impact on student achievement. When students have consistent access to Georgia Virtual School, then their motivation is the strongest. According to the regression tool, there was a level of significance of .021 in terms of student motivation; when they have this access. Parental support was most impacted by teacher support, student motivation and student preference for online versus traditional delivery methods. R Square coefficients showed that teacher support was the strongest of the influential variables accounting for 17% of the variance in parental support, while student motivation contributed only 11%, and

student preference for online vs traditional was the least impactful with a contribution of only 5%.

Implications

Implications for Parental Support

In addition to the support received at school, it's important to pay attention to the support received at-home, especially when considering the outcomes from academic and social emotions. The findings in the study imply that parental support impact the academic success of students.

Fostering relationships between teachers and parents and between the home and school environments has been strongly promoted by policy makers (NCLB, 2002), educators (Borba, 2009), and researchers (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008). Consequently, there is a large body of literature that has examined the associations between parental involvement and important school-related outcomes for children (Fan & Chen, 2001; Nye, Turner, & Schwartz, 2006). In this literature base, parental involvement is typically defined as “parents’ behaviors in home and school settings meant to support their children’s educational progress” (El Nokali et al., 2010, p. 989). Examinations of parental involvement using this definitional framework have tended to show that parental involvement is positively related to academic achievement and learning-related skills during the elementary school years (e.g., Dearing, Kreider, Simpkins, & Weiss, 2006; Izzo, Weissberg, Kasprow, & Fendrich, 1999; Miedel & Reynolds, 1999).

Schools within the district could use the findings from this study to increase the amount of support schools receive from parents as it relates to academic success of

students. Parental support should be made one of the major priorities of schools. Schools can create programs that educate parents on how they can support students at home. The main goals of the No Child left Behind Act (NCLB) are: (a) more choices for parents and student, (b) greater flexibility for states and school district, (c) stronger accountability for results, and (d) use of research-based instructional methods (USDE, 2007). Parental involvement is essential if educators want to attain greater success in schools (Robles, 2011). If parents said they were informed about the credit recovery procedures, this implies that there is a high level of communication between the school and home.

Support needed for students to be successful goes further than what is provided at school. This is why a partnership needs to be built between home and school to ensure that learning does not stop once students leave the school building.

Implications for Student Motivation

Previous research has consistently shown that children's academic self-beliefs and self-perceptions contribute to their educational success (Guay, Marsh, & Boivin, 2003; Marsh & Martin, 2011; Valentine et al., 2004). Students with positive self-confidence about their academic abilities are more likely to have better performance. Marsh and colleagues (Marsh, 1990a; Marsh, Byrne, & Yeung, 1999; Marsh & Craven, 2006; Marsh & Martin, 2011) proposed the reciprocal-effects model to describe the relationship between academic self-concept (i.e., students' beliefs about their academic abilities) and achievement. The reciprocal effects model is based on the idea that academic self-concept and achievement share a 24 reciprocal relationship wherein higher levels of self-concept contribute to higher achievement, and higher achievement contributes to more

positive self-concept (Niehaus, 2012). This model has been well supported in research studies with the general school-aged population (Marsh, 1990a; Marsh et al., 1999; Marsh & Craven, 2006; Marsh & Martin, 2011) and also with elementary school children (Guay, Marsh, & Boivin, 2003), suggesting that academic self-concept and school performance are mutually reinforcing even in the early educational years.

In order for a credit recovery program to function successfully, parental involvement is a must-have. Developing a partnership between the school and home should be an important initiative for school leaders. Within an effective credit recovery program, there should be an administrator that monitors the day-to-day activities of the program. This administrator serves as the liaison between the school and home. Meeting with individual students on a consistent basis; having a graduation conversation is a good practice.

The counseling department plays a major role in the success of the academic success of all students. For students who have gotten off track for graduating on time, quarterly parent meetings are good practices. On a quarterly basis, parents should be brought in at a convenient hour to discuss the academic remediation for their child. These discussions should start with a whole-group, and then break off to focus on the individual student's needs. This will allow the parents to know and see first-hand the plan the school has to get their student back on-track to graduate with their respective cohort.

School leaders at the high school level should also collaborate with leaders from the middle school. Developing a plan for the transition of the rising ninth graders is essential in the overall high school success. Administrators from both middle and high should have constant communication with the counselors, about the transition to high

school. Within these discussions should be dialogue about ways to inform the parents about the graduation requirements. Credit recovery options should not be a focus of the conversation. The conversation should include the best behaviors that should exist to ensure the academic success of the student. There should be meetings build into the calendar where department chairs, counselors, and administrators from the high school go to the middle school; to support the scheduling process from middle to high school courses. This should occur over more than one occasion per each feeder middle school.

Implications to Increase Online Education

Online learning programs are convenient because they provide the student the opportunity to access at their own pace. According to Gubernick and Ebeling (1997), 762 or 15% of U.S. institutions of higher learning offered distance education courses in 1996. By the fall of 2000-2001, 56% of all colleges and universities granting 2- and 4-year degree programs offered online courses (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2003). In 2002, over 1,000 students were enrolled in an online program known as Making Virtual Classroom a Reality at the University of Illinois (Santovec, 2003).

In a survey conducted by Allen and Seaman (2010), more than 50% of the institutions offering online and face-to-face courses stated that they experienced increased enrollment in both types of courses. This survey concluded that of the students who chose to enroll in college, more than 85% of these students chose to enroll in online courses. A majority of public institutions surveyed indicated that online learning has

become an important part of their long-term educational strategy (see Figure 7). “Sixty-three percent of all reporting institutions noted that online learning was a critical part of their institution’s long term strategy and strategic plan” (Allen & Seaman, 2010, p. 2).

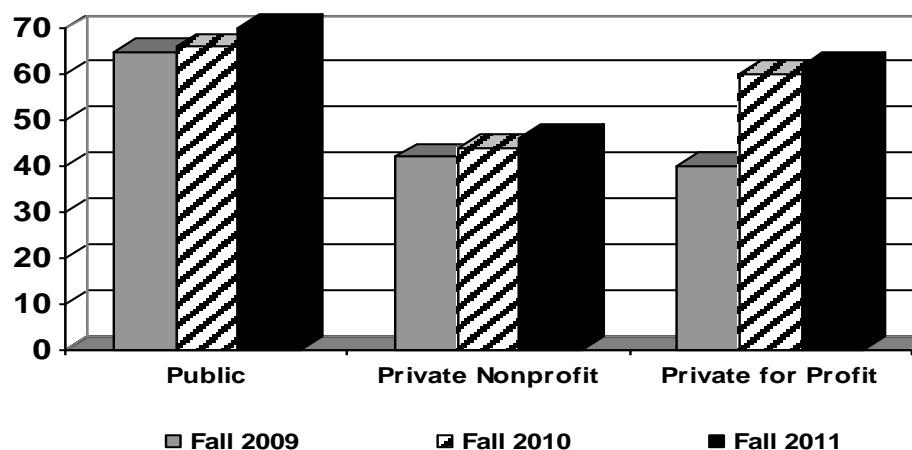


Figure 7: Fall 2009 and Fall 2010 percentage of students who agree with the statement: online education is critical to the long-term strategy of my institution.

An extensive literature review revealed little research about how students assess their online course experience both in terms of course content and delivery, as well as student-to-student and instructor-to-student interaction (Nwankwo, 2015). Kirk (cited in Tsayang, 2011) stated that the needs of online students can be deduced from their perceptions and experiences, but those perceptions and experiences have been inadequately studied. Assenting to this view, Dunston and Albalawi (2014) stated that “Although many institutions are offering an increasing number of online courses and programs, there is a limited body of knowledge on requirements for online course delivery that leads to high levels of student satisfaction and learning” (p. 1).

A student in Chen, Bennett, and Maton's (2008) study stated, "Everyone talked about their own situations and their opinions, and without the teacher's comments, I didn't know whom to listen to" (p. 315). It is important for the instructor to participate in class discussions, to keep the class from looking disorganized. For example, Licona (2011) wrote the following: "Pedagogical practice is informed by the immediacy of action and presence of instructor in the online learning space, thus fostering collaboration in numerous ways" (p. 7). In order to increase student participation, an instructor can ask questions and provide feedback directly related to a student's contribution (Durrington, Berryhill, & Swafford, 2006). The participation of the instructor in discussion boards is a way to motivate student to participate in discussion.

When it comes to motivating students to stay engaged in collaboration with other students, there is a need for several tools. When using collaborative tools as a form of measurement of participation, one tool can likely be too limiting (Gao, Zhang, & Franklin, 2013). Most students currently use social networking skills for fun or consumption purposes, not for engaging in communal learning behavior with other students (Cole, 2009). As a response, instructors should create a space and exercises for students to practice editing, publishing, and posting content through any communication tool being utilized (Cole, 2009). Regardless of the communication structure, students' technical and personal constraints in addition to a general lack of interest, limit their participation and contributions to these virtual communication platforms (Cole, 2009).

Teachers play a major role in motivating students. Based on the research, an implication would be to have a certified teacher available in each of the four core areas to provide additional support for the students who participate in credit recovery. For

students who participate in credit recovery, having a certified teacher available in the course that is being recouped is beneficial. Students are in credit recovery because they failed the course the first time it was offered, with a certified teacher. Credit recovery is only offered online. The likelihood of students completing online modules for courses that need to be recouped without a certified teacher in the field is highly unlikely.

Having a certified teacher available in each of the four core areas provides additional support for the students who participate in credit recovery. Recognizing the additional workload for students who participate in credit recovery and having a regular full schedule is imperative. Students are in credit recovery because they are behind in one or more courses. There are still graduation requirements; students must complete 23 credits (correct credits) in order to graduation from high school. Maximizing every opportunity for the student to be successful will support the success of the credit recovery students.

Based on the reviewed studies and school district's accountability requirements, educational leaders will find it necessary to focus on areas or predictors within the family, society, or individual circumstances of the child, as well as in the academic surroundings and materials in order to meet the diverse needs of the students (Hickock, 2002; Zamudio, 2004). Principals may need to reassess how they design the daily bell schedule to accommodate the credit recovery needs. Educational leaders should focus on areas or predictors within the family, society, or individual circumstances of the child, as well as in the academic surroundings and materials in order to meet the diverse needs of the students.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations to this study included the following: analyses were limited to a single high school located in a large Atlanta metropolitan school district; the researcher works at the research site but does not supervise the program. Therefore, during the student survey process, the students may not have answered the questions truthfully.

Recommendations

According to Applegate (2003),

Predicting student achievement by identifying certain factors or variables that relate to student success can be a valuable asset to teachers, counselors, administrators, and members of the community. Student achievement and success are a success the ultimate goals of the educational intuitions of today. (p. 75)

The goal of the credit recovery program that was implemented at the research site was to allow students to be able to recoup credits for courses that they had previously attempted but were unsuccessful. Recouping missed credits would put these students back on track for graduating with their cohort, as long as they are successful in their current classes.

Recommendations for Educational Leaders

- Educational leaders must involve the parents, more, in the academic support process for students who have not been successful in courses, the first time.
- Educational leaders should have a system in place that tracks the progress of the credit recovery participants; checking for completion.
- Educational leaders should create a daily schedule that allows students to be able to work on credit recovery during the school day.

- Educational leaders should support credit recovery students by providing them with certified teachers in each area (math, science, social studies, and language arts).
- Educational leaders should make sure that the expectations for completing credit recovery are clear.
- Educational leaders should coach teachers who may have students participating in credit recovery, on research-based instructional practices that motivate students.

Recommendations for Classroom Teachers

- Teachers should recognize the additional workload that comes with participating in a credit recovery program. Students have current classes. Additional classes are being made up through the participation of credit recovery. Students do not need to fall behind in the current courses.
- Teachers should allow students to work on credit recovery in the classroom, if there is additional time.

Recommendations for Parents

- Parents should be equipped with the tools needed to best support their students educational needs.
- Parents should provide the students with the resources need to be successful in an online instructional program.

Recommendations for Future Research

The following recommendations for future research were revealed through the analysis of the data and research that was gathered during this study:

- The sample can increase to include more schools within the school district; approximately four schools.
- The study can be longitudinal, gathering data over a longer span of time and not just focus on one year's worth of data.
- The study could gather data on home support (how many households have access to the internet or working computers).
- The study could also conduct research and gather data to see what effect technology has on learning.
- Extend this study to include further work on teachers support for parents of students who participate in online programs.
- Extend this study to include student use of technology in all credit recovery programs.

Summary

It was a goal of this study to identify the effect that parental support, administrative advisement support, teacher support, student motivation, preference for online vs traditional delivery methods, and student access/use of Georgia Virtual Schools had on student success on a specific credit recovery program related to the completion of graduation credits. The findings in this study will provide the school district with tools of best-practice that will support students who have gotten off-track for graduating on-time.

It was revealed through the use of the correlation, ANOVA, Alpha Cronbach, construct validity, and regression tests based on student surveys and parent interviews that student motivation and parental support had the strongest significance as it relates to student achievement.

APPENDIX A

Credit Recovery Survey

- (1) _____ How many Credit recovery courses are you currently enrolled in?
- a. 1
 - b. 2
 - c. 3
 - d. 4
- (2) _____ How many credits have you been able to recoup, using this Credit recovery Model?
- a. .5
 - b. 1
 - c. 1.5
 - d. 2
- (3) _____ How many credits do you need to recoup in order to graduate on-time?
- a. 1-2
 - b. 3-4
 - c. 5-6
 - d. 6-more
- (4) _____ Are you aware of the amount of time (weeks) you have to complete the Credit recovery courses that you are registered in?
- a. Yes
 - b. No

| Parental Support | Strongly | | | | |
|---|----------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| | Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| 5. My parents support my academic career. | | | | | |
| 6. My parents are aware of the courses I need for credit recovery. | | | | | |
| 7. My parents have provided me a computer where I can access credit recovery. | | | | | |
| 8. My parents are able to assist me with my credit recovery courses. | | | | | |

| | Strongly | | | | Strongly |
|---|----------|-------|---------|----------|----------|
| Parental Support | Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Disagree |
| 9. My parents are actively involved at my school. | | | | | |
| 10. My parents are often times too busy to help with credit recovery. | | | | | |
| Administrative Support | | | | | |
| 11. I feel that the school is doing a good job at addressing the needs of students who have gotten off-track by implementing Credit Recovery. | | | | | |
| 12. The school is contributing to the positive gains in graduating students, by implementing Credit recovery. | | | | | |
| 13. The school offers after-hours access locations (on-campus), to complete Credit Recovery. | | | | | |
| 14. My school is very good at staying in contact with my parents (phone calls, emails, newsletters) | | | | | |
| 15. When I have an issue/concern with Credit Recovery, I know who to contact. | | | | | |
| Teacher Support | | | | | |
| 16. Teachers are available to hear my questions. | | | | | |
| 17. Time spent face-to-face with a teacher in class is beneficial to my success in Credit Recovery. | | | | | |
| 18. The teacher is always available to discuss problems with me. | | | | | |
| 19. My teacher is able to answer questions that I bring to class. | | | | | |
| 20. My teacher shows concern if I am not making adequate progress on my Credit Recovery modules. | | | | | |
| Student Motivation | | | | | |
| 21. Graduating with my cohort (class) is important to me. | | | | | |
| 22. On average, how many hours per week do you spend working on Credit recovery (outside of school)? (Circle one) | 0-4 | 5-10 | 11-15 | 16-more | |
| 23. Have you had to pay the re-enrollment fee (\$25), due to not successfully completing the courses you are registered in? (Circle one) | Yes | | | No | |
| Student Preference for Online vs. Traditional Delivery Methods | | | | | |
| 24. The online modules were easy to complete. | | | | | |

| | Strongly | | | | Strongly |
|---|----------|-------|---------|----------|----------|
| | Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Disagree |
| 25. I would prefer taking this class in the traditional setting because I would be with my friends. | | | | | |
| Student Access/Use of Georgia Virtual School | | | | | |
| 26. The attendance policy made it easy for me to work on my Credit recovery during Ram Time. (Ram Time is equivalent to Advisement) | | | | | |
| 27. My school created an environment where I could complete Credit recovery at school, on a daily basis. | | | | | |
| 28. Students who work on Credit recovery during Ram Time are more likely to complete the program. | | | | | |

APPENDIX B

Local School Research Request Form



LOCAL SCHOOL RESEARCH REQUEST FORM

Name of School: Clark-Atlanta University

Name of Researcher: Andrew C. Headd

Position or Grade: Assistant Principal — (

A. Research Project

a. **Title:** The Effect of Parental Support, Administrative Advisement Support, and Teacher Support on the Effectiveness of a Credit Recovery Program, as it Relates to Successful Completion of Graduation Credits

b. **Statement of Problem and research question:**

Statement of the Problem

In recent years, a large metropolitan Atlanta school has been named a two timed Broad Prize winner. However, the graduation rate within this school district is 75%. Mathematically, this means that 1 out of 4 students within a cohort does not graduate. The graduation rate at the school where this study is based for the 2013-2014 School Year was 83.6%.

In order to improve the graduation rate throughout the district, schools must begin to focus on that 1 out of 4 that has been allowed to not graduate. This school sought to improve its graduation rate to 90% for the 2014-2015 School Year. Credit recovery is the next option. Traditionally schools have promoted various methods for recouping credits. Some options have been through online programs; programs that are split between teacher instruction and online modules; summer school; and the participation in after hour learning. All of these options come with a cost. Many students cannot afford to pay the financial costs that are associated with these credit recovery options. Some programs require \$150-\$250 per course. Time is also a huge cost. Many students who fall into this category of having to participate in credit recovery, often times have other obligations that require their time and participation; outside of regular school hours.

One particular program that has been adopted by a local school is a credit recovery program through the use of Georgia Virtual Schools. Georgia Virtual Schools offers a teacher led, virtual classroom atmosphere. Focusing on the 2011 Cohort (2015 graduating class), 138 students were identified as off-track for graduation. Students are identified as off-track if they fail one or more courses. Through the Georgia Virtual School, these

138 students were given the opportunity to recoup credits by completing online modules. Through the adoption of this program, students had the opportunity to recoup credits during school hours, for free of charge. Students were enrolled in this credit recovery program if they had previously failed a course with a 60-69%. Participants completed online modules, daily, during lunch and Advisement. The local school designated the computers in the Media Center, during this specific time; for the use of the credit recovery students.

The goal of this program is to allow students to recoup credits and get back on track to graduate. Assistance is also provided to students through the use of peer tutoring. An administrator and counselors provide academic support to the participants as well.

Research Questions

- RQ1: What are the benefits of an online environment, compared to a traditional classroom setting?
- RQ2: Is there a difference in graduation rates at a specific high school, based on the credit recovery program that is being implemented?
- RQ3: Is there a relationship between parental support and student achievement at a specific high school?
- RQ4: Is there a relationship between administrative support and student achievement at a specific high school?
- RQ5: Is there a relationship between teacher support and student achievement at a specific high school?
- RQ6: How do costs associated with the credit recovery program at this specific school, used to determine the best route to help your student recoup missed credits?
- RQ7: What are the benefits of providing your student resources (access to technology) at home, as it relates to successfully completing credit recovery?
- RQ8: What are the benefits of having a school that has a specific program that will allow your student to recoup credits, during the school day?
- RQ9: Are there any benefits of having a certified teacher available to support your student with their credit recovery courses?

c. Subjects or population for the study:

The 2012 Cohort consists of 121 students who are off track for graduation. Students are identified as off-track for graduation for three specific reasons: Gateway scores, not enough credit, or the student was retained. This research will be conducted with the specifics of addressing students not having enough credits. The sample will include 77 students out of the 121, who are off-track because they failed one or more courses and are eligible to participate in credit recovery due to the range in which they filed the courses. Data was collected from the 2014-2015 (2011 Cohort) as preliminary data. There will be five parents of students who participated in the Credit Recovery program that will also be a part of this study. Data from the 2015-2016 School Year (2012 Cohort), will be collected and analyzed for this study. There are 10 credit recovery classes that consist of 11th and 12th grade (repeaters). For each credit recovery class that the students are enrolled in, they will have 6-weeks to complete the course; for free of charge. If courses are not completed within this timeframe, then there will be a \$25 re-enrollment fee.

d. Reason for doing this research:

☒ Graduate Study at Clark-Atlanta University University/College
☐ Publication/Presentation
☐ Other (please specify) _____

e. Dates research will be conducted: August 2015 to May 2016

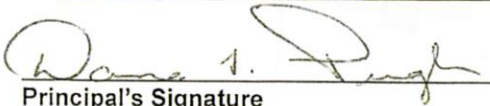
B. All research and researchers must a) Protect the rights and welfare of all human subjects, b) Inform students and/or parents that they have the right not to participate in the study, c) Adhere to board policies and applicable laws which govern the privacy and confidentiality of student records.

C. This request applies to research conducted within and by local school personnel. All other research requests must be submitted by completing a GCPS Research Application and submitting it electronically according to instructions. For complete details and instructions, please visit our Web Page at the following link: <http://tinyurl.com/kpm8hc2> or simply go to gwinnett.k12.ga.us. From the main GCPS webpage, click on "I want to..., Apply for..., Research Approval."

D. Principals ONLY need to approve Local School Research Requests. The copy sent to the Research & Evaluation Office is for filing purposes only. No further approval is necessary or available.

E. After approval by the principal, please forward a copy of this completed form to:

| | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| Via GCPS Courier: Colin Martin Research & Evaluation ISC | Via US Mail: Dr. Colin Martin, Executive Director Research & Evaluation Department Gwinnett County Public Schools 437 Old Peachtree Road, NW Suwanee, GA 30024 | Via Fax: Colin Martin 678-301-7088 | Via Scanned Lotus Notes Attachment: <u>Pat Bridwell</u> |
|---|---|--|--|


Principal's Signature

April 28, 2016
Date of Approval

APPENDIX C

Clark Atlanta University Institutional Review Board



CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY Institutional Review Board Office of Sponsored Programs

August 7, 2016

Mr. Andrew Headd <andrew.headd@gmail.com>
Education Leadership Department
School of Education
Clark Atlanta University
223 James P. Brawley Dr. SW
Atlanta, GA 30314

RE: The Effect of Parental Support, Administrative Advisement Support, Teacher Support, on the Effectiveness of a Credit Recovery Program, as it Relates to Successful Completion of Graduation Credits.

Principal Investigator(s): Andrew Headd

Human Subjects Code Number: HR2016-8-662-1

Dear Mr. Headd:

The Human Subjects Committee of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your protocol and approved of it as exempt in accordance with 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2).

Your Protocol Extended Approval Code is HR2016-8-662-1/A

Type of Review: Expedited.

This permit will expire on August 6, 2017. Thereafter, continued approval is contingent upon the annual submission of a renewal form to this office. Please change the site for storage of signed Consent Forms from Grayson High School to CAU Department of Education Leadership.

The CAU IRB acknowledges your timely completion of the CITI IRB Training in Protection of Human Subjects – "Social and Behavioral Sciences Track". Your CITI certification expires on July 9, 2018.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRB Office or Dr. Paul I. Musey, (404) 880-6829.

Sincerely:

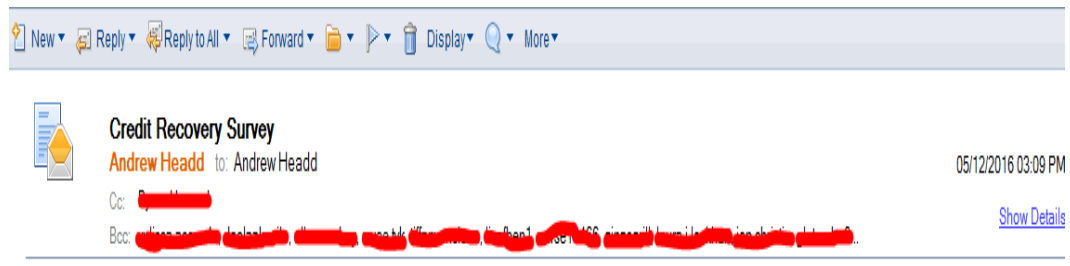
Paul I. Musey, Ph.D.
Chair
IRB: Human Subjects Committee

223 James P. Brawley Drive, S.W. * ATLANTA, GA 30314-4391 * (404) 880-8000

Formed in 1988 by consolidation of Atlanta University, 1863 and Clark College, 1869

APPENDIX D

Permission to Administer Student Survey



Good Afternoon,

Our school is asking students (2012 Cohort) to participate in a Credit Recovery Survey. The survey will be given to obtain useful information from students about their feelings and perceptions related to Credit Recovery course completion.

Questions on the survey will include: assess of Georgia Virtual Schools online curriculum at home and school, student motivation to complete online modules, preference for online vs traditional delivery methods, parental support, administrative advisement support, and teacher support.

This will be an anonymous and confidential paper and pencil survey. Students will not have to include any personal information. The privacy of the students is protected. The survey should take 5-10 minutes to complete.

If you choose to have your student opt out of completing this survey, please respond via email: andrew_headd@gwinnett.k12.ga.us

Please respond by May 16, 2016.

Again, thank you for your support and assistance related to student achievement at our school.

Andrew Headd, Assistant Principal

APPENDIX E

Parent Interview Questions

1. Have you had to pay for your student to attend summer school?
2. If so, what was the cost of each course?
3. Are you aware that the local school has adopted a program that will allow your student to recover credits that they have missed?
4. Are you aware that the Credit Recovery Program that the local school is using is free of charge?
5. Which method of credit recovery do you prefer? The summer school option or the Credit Recovery Program at the local school?
6. How often do you hear from the school, regarding the progress your student has made in their credit recovery courses?
7. Does your student have a computer to complete their credit recovery, at home?
8. How often do you work with your student, offering assistance in understanding their credit recovery assignments?
9. If you could offer the local school any suggestions for making the Credit Recovery Program better, what would it be?

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